

Identities in Transition: German landscape painting 1871-1914

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Introduction

I have come to like the federal system as practiced in our country very much. The feeling of having a homeland as well as a sense of regionalism has finally found a channel for political expression in Germany. No more anonymous GDR administrative divisions, but a real sense of identity: the Brandenburger, the Mecklenburger, the Western Pomeranians, the people of Saxony-Anhalt, the Saxons and the Thuringians.¹

In an address commemorating the day of German re-unification in 2006, Angela Merkel recognized Germany's regional identities in the above quote. She advocates that regional identities were so strong that they were able to endure the GDR, which, according to her, did not really support them politically. She therefore actually suggests that the country's federal identity has, even during periods of political repression, always manifested itself culturally. It is Germany's specific ability to embrace different identities; how this has been manifested in landscape painting around 1900 that is the focus of this thesis.

The period covered here is c.1871 to 1914 as they mark the years when Germany officially became a nation state and the outbreak of the First World War. Recent

¹ Chancellor Angela Merkel from a speech celebrating German unification, 2006, 03.10.2006. (Ich habe mich begeistert für die föderale Ordnung unseres Landes. Heimat und regionales Lebensgefühl fanden endlich auch bei uns wieder politisch einen Ausdruck. Nicht mehr anonyme DDR-Bezirke, sondern Identität: Die Brandenburger, die Mecklenburger, die Vorpommern, die Sachsen-Anhalter, die Sachsen und die Thüringer.)

academic surveys maintain that Germany was in the process of an intense awakening of regional identities at this time. The present work is based on three places in Germany where artists settled and expressed a sense of regional identity, Dachau (Bavaria), Worpswede (Lower Saxony) and the Eifel (the Rhineland). These three geographic locations of Germany have been chosen in an attempt to explore the visual representations of the country's varied landscapes and distinct federal identities at a time during which the construction of a national identity was on the political agenda. This thesis is rooted in a debate that has been established in political history but as yet has not been tackled in relation to German landscape painting. The work that follows endorses and deepens the established field of political history in an art historical context. It is based on primary research carried out in regional archives of the three German provinces.

German identity reconsidered as regional with landscape in the limelight

The subject of German federal identity is a field that has opened up since the end of the Cold War. It has subsequently gained considerable impetus, beginning with Celia Applegate's *A Nation of Provincials*.² Pioneering German regional identity (by concentrating on the Palatine region), Applegate's book readdressed the concept of *Heimat* from the 1850s to the 1950s. She convincingly argued that the model reconciled individual local identities with a sense of overarching national identity. She paved the way for authors such as Alon Confino who contributed to Applegate's work using sources based in Württemberg but takes

² C. Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials*, Oxford, 1990.

her work further with his tenet that states that the concepts of nation and region in Imperial Germany were interchangeable. For Confino local was national.³ Glenn Penny, who also attributes his theory to Applegate, argued that museums were another form of cultural expression: a demonstration of local pride with a national significance.⁴ Penny demonstrates in his case study however, that national identity was the unconscious bi-product of regional competition between museum collectors. Abigail Green's work, which again pays tribute to Applegate and Confino, uses a different approach with a focus on the economics of Germany's industry, in her book titled *Fatherlands*.⁵ Her work also benefits from a comparison between three *Länder* rather than a single case study. She shows how, with the economic strength of industry, Hanover, Saxony and Württemberg built monuments and used symbols to reflect their distinct identities.

Applegate and Confino attributed to Germany one of the earliest nature conservation movements in Europe, both suggested that this was one way of expressing local pride. Thomas Lekan's *Imagining the Nation in Nature* took this discussion much further by using Germany's natural environment as his case study. Lekan uses the province of the Rhineland in which to base his report. He contends the territory was highly romanticised in the early nineteenth century and subsequently industrialised and polluted in the later part of the century thus becoming a fiercely contested site by around 1900. Building upon Applegate and

³ T. Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature*, London, 2004.

⁴ G. Penny, *Fashioning Local Identities in an Age of Nation-Building: Museums, Cosmopolitan Visions and Intra-German Competition*, in 'German History', Vol. 17, No. 4, Arnold, 1999, London.

⁵ A. Green, *Fatherlands*, Cambridge, 2001.

Confino's work, Lekan describes local nature conservation as a down to top expression of national identity.

Since the end of the Cold War probing questions have been raised about Germany's federal identity, in the period between 1871 and 1914. This study of regional identity in landscape painting, therefore, methodologically benefits from the debate about the distinctiveness of Germany's various selves. The present study continues in the footsteps of those who have paved the way for a federal approach to German history but, it uses an art historical methodology, where artists repeatedly depict cultural or geographic symbols, in order to define their federal status. Applegate, Green, Lekan and Penny have all used different cultural expressions of how German's articulated regional loyalty, arguing for a dialectical relationship with national identity.

This thesis focuses on the subject of landscape painting. However, where my work differs in methodology to those cited is that I argue that the artists were not just reflecting an established regional identity: they were shaping, forming and inventing identities. These constructed identities were subsequently accepted both by little known local journalists and well-known authors and thus contributed to changing as well confirming regional identities, keeping them in a perpetual continuum of negotiating between artist and reception.

German Romantic Painting c.1800

This work benefits from a substantial study of German landscape painting at the beginning of the nineteenth century, where the field of the Romantics, with Caspar

David Friedrich at its core, has already been well established. William Vaughan's *German Romantic Painting* focuses on Caspar David Friedrich and his contemporary Phillip Otto Runge. Through their images he shows how important landscape was in the German consciousness.⁶ This study also benefits from his history of the establishment of art institutions in Germany and its art unions, which were well defined by the end of the century. Werner Hoffman has widely contributed to the field of early nineteenth century landscape painting. In the opening pages of his impressive book on German Romanticism's protagonist Caspar David Friedrich, he discusses federalism along the lines of Friedrich's longing for a unified Germany.⁷ This thesis transposes Hoffman's idea to the turn of the twentieth century when federal identity experienced a revival in the wake of a newly established German nation.

Regional Identity in Colonies and Landscape Painting

Although this is the first work to study German artists' colonies with a focus on regional identity it is not the first to look at German artists' colonies themselves. Each of the places where the artists settled has its own art historiography. There will be a focus on these at the beginning of each chapter. The field benefits from a broader perspective taken up by Gerhard Wietek's monograph *Deutsche Künstlerkolonien und Künstlerorte*, which gives an excellent historical survey of eighteen of the places where artists settled.⁸ The subject of German landscape painting profits from this German perspective because German artists consider the Northern School of art to be influential. Nina Lübbren takes a refreshingly different socio-political approach in *Rural artists' colonies in Europe 1870-1910*⁹. Although this text does not focus on

⁶ W. Vaughan, *German Romantic Painting*, London, 1980.

⁷ W. Hoffmann, *Caspar David Friedrich*, London, 2000.

⁸ G. Wietek, *Deutsche Künstlerkolonie und Künstlerorte*, 1976, Munich

⁹ N. Lübbren, *Rural Artists' Colonies in Europe 1870-1910*, Manchester, 2001

German artists' colonies she does study, as Wietek's work did, Dachau and Worpswede. This analysis particularly benefits from her chapter entitled *Painting place-myths* in which she claims that artists constructed 'place-myths' through the repetition of iconography that they had chosen to best represent the location they painted from.¹⁰ While my own analysis is deeply indebted to her book I wish to steer beyond an interpretation of visual iconography as myth inducing and rather place German landscapes in their own socio-political and federal framework.

Perhaps the most well known text to discuss regional and national identity in painting during this period has become Linda Nochlin's essay on Gustav Courbet's *Burial at Ornans*, in which she discusses his work as challenging the dominant culture through what she calls this regional, folkloric depiction.¹¹ My approach compliments hers as; it is the study of how artists represented regional and national identities, from a rural location, during this period. I build on her general concept of regional identity in landscape painting during the same period and transpose it to Germany to draw different conclusions.

Towards a methodology

Essentially, the approach to this thesis uses political history to interpret art history. The following chapters are dedicated to uncovering how artists defined Germany's various lands. We have seen how authors such as Confino, Lekan and Penny have equated national and regional identity as a mono-directional flow from one to the other. Furthermore, as discussed above, Applegate and Penny agreed that the creation of a national identity through culture was unconscious.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 115-117.

¹¹ L. Nochlin, *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society*, New York, 1989.

The analysis of identities in the paintings in this thesis are considered to be more intangible, for at times artists are clearly constructing regional identities, particularly in the Worpswede colony. Others, such as the Eifel landscapes, are conscious markers of a national identity and the attempt to combine it with the local. The Dachau paintings further complicate matters since, as it is argued here, Bavaria aspired to be a nation-state in its own right so artists represented a regional (Dachau) identity and federal and national (Bavarian) identity both of which fed into an overarching national (German) identity. The issue of identity here is understood as *identities* in the sense of Stuart Hall who claims that after the age of industrialisation identities have become 'fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions.'¹²

The identities studied in this thesis then are not binary; one does not exclusively dominate the other, but are constructed in a constant negotiation between the local, regional and national. As such this study participates in a wider dialogue that has exploded since the 1960s in sociology and beyond about the formation of identity. Homi K. Bhabha has discussed the polemic system of identities and nations with respect to his subject of post-colonialism.¹³ He notes, that the 'problem is not simply the "self-hood" of the nation as opposed to the otherness of other nations. We are confronted with the nation split within itself, articulating the heterogeneity of its population.'¹⁴

¹² S. Hall, *Who Needs 'Identity'*, in 'Questions of Cultural Identity', S. Hall and Paul du Gay, [eds], London, 1996, 4.

¹³ H. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, New York, 1994.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 212.

Bhabha's key argument in post-colonial literature is that the colonised have used a hybridisation of cultures in order to create a shift in the dynamics of power in their favour. Similarly, in this thesis, the artists adopted the rhetoric of the state and combined it with their expression of local and regional identities in order to create their own version of cultural imperialism. In addition to migration, that subverts the idea of a nation as state, regional identities *per se* contest the idea of a nation-state as a holistic unity. Thus, by building on Bhabha's concept, it also challenges his nation-state concept as a construction historically being challenged by the regional and local.

In terms of the regional, this thesis follows in Mike Featherstone's footsteps. He claimed that national and regional identities are cultural manifestations.

The assumption, here, is that one's identity and those of one's significant others are anchored in a specific local, a physical space which becomes emotionally invested and sedimented with symbolic associations so that it becomes a place.¹⁵

Drawing on his work, I will show how the artists were instrumental in inventing what Featherstone calls, 'symbolic associations' through the repetition of motifs which they thought best characterised the region's landscape and culture, thus in a process of defining regional (and national) identities. It will be shown here that the artists who moved to these countryside locations constructed identities for the places they depicted, at times aggressively promoting the image that they had constructed as the defining identity for that site.

¹⁵ M. Featherstone, 'Localism, Globalism and Cultural Identity', in L. Martin Alcoff and E. Mendieta [eds] *Identities, Race, Class, Gender; and Nationality*, Oxford, 2003, 347.

Structure of this Thesis

The first chapter focuses on two artists who worked in the Eifel mountains. Like the artists in the chapters on Dachau and Worpswede they too developed a language with which others would come to describe the place but their tone was more nationalistic than the other two examples and, as will be shown here, based on a colonialist perspective of hegemony over land. Furthermore, a case will be made here that the Rhineland's shared border with France increased a sense of victimhood that became an intrinsic part of the Eifel's identity.

The second chapter in this thesis is based on Dachau, which, before being made infamous for the Nazis' atrocities, was a thriving artists' colony. The artists drew on themes to represent both the town of Dachau and its surroundings and what they considered to be Bavaria's culture. It will be shown how Bavaria's identity was itself being constructed during this period. Nevertheless, artists chose to repeat themes in their work from the local culture and the natural environment that they thought best epitomised a traditional Bavarian town. The identity that they created for the town was expressed at both ground and state level with a celebration of the town's 1100 years. At least one of the artists featured in the colony here is known to have been in attendance.

The last chapter explores the development of Worpswede. It was and remains, a thriving artists' colony to this day. It will be shown here that artists chose it specifically for the fact that it was far from an art academy and as such had not yet been defined artistically. The state of Lower Saxony was formed only in 1871 and as such also lacked a cohesive identity. The artists not only developed an

artistic language with which locals and artists would come to describe the village, they also helped to found a journal for the state of Lower Saxony. It gave both the artists' community and the people of this province a voice in which to describe themselves.

It will be maintained in all three chapters that there was a dialogue between the artists, local journalists and best selling authors, such as: Arthur Rößler, Rainer Maria Rilke and Clara Viebig, all of whom embraced the identities the artists had invented. Furthermore, regional journals were supported by conservation groups who aimed to protect the newly established identities. Thus the people who lived in the cited rural locations saw themselves depicted in the imagined communities that had been constructed by the landscape painters. Additionally outside authors accepted and expanded upon these assembled identities. Therefore there is the construction of identity by the other and accepted by both the other and the same. The same then becomes both receiver and producer of identity. Hence, in Bhabha's sense, identity is 'always constituted in a process of substitution, displacement or projection', guaranteeing a non-essential, multi-positional and fluent conception of culture even at the turn to the twentieth century.¹⁶

¹⁶ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 162

I Landscape as metaphor: identity, myth making and longing in the Eifel

This chapter will focus on two artists who painted the Eifel landscape and fashioned its identity: Heinrich Hartung the elder (1851-1919) and Fritz von Wille (1860-1941). Different from Worpswede, they did not form a group, but worked independently of each other, becoming colleagues at the Düsseldorf Academy with similar aims in their works.¹⁷ Although they were never internationally renowned, they both had successful careers within the province of the Rhineland. Hartung became quite wealthy with the sale of his work; He mainly exhibited in Düsseldorf but he also won prizes at international exhibitions in London and Melbourne.¹⁸ During his lifetime the Koblenz city art gallery bought one of his Eifel landscapes.¹⁹ Wille's work won prizes in London, Munich and Vienna but the bulk of his work was sold in the Rhineland.²⁰ Wille's work was more successful than Hartung's in the Eifel, however, and from 1910-1913 two towns in the district commissioned over fourteen works from him.²¹ The artists expressed the identity of the Eifel's landscape in a significantly important way by choosing particular themes or subject matter using the style of

¹⁷ R. Schmitt, *Die Koblenzer Künstlerfamilie Hartung*, Neuwied, 1965, 12, M. Klütsch, *Die Sammlung von Wille*, Bitburg, 1992, 14.

¹⁸ R. Jenson, *Heinrich Hartung –Maler der Morgensonne und des Frühlings*, Mayen, 1985, 17-20.

¹⁹ H. Hartung, *Autobiographie Heinrich Hartung für den Künstlerverein 'Malkasten'*, Düsseldorf, Malkasten, 19.04.1888

²⁰ M. Klütsch, *Fritz von Wille*, Bitburg, 2006, 8.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

the sublime; this will be explained as the reasons why their work sold predominantly well in the Rhineland.

The following literature review shows that the idea that the artists in the Eifel were helping to create an identity for the area they painted is a new idea, so too is the claim that they were involved in its commercialisation. Clara Viebig and those who wrote in the *Eifelverein* further inherited the identity that Hartung and Wille had helped to create and marketed the Eifel using their language. Viebig moved to Berlin from the Rhineland as a young woman, by 1914 she had already established herself as an author with thirteen published novels and seven novellas, most of which were set in the Eifel.²²

This chapter is different from the other two since it does not feature an artists' colony; this thesis does not feature the dynamic of the artists' colony as its subject, but rather the landscape paintings themselves. As such, this chapter offers an interesting counterpoint to the other two chapters since it highlights that even when artists were not directly working together under the conscious collective of an established group it shows that they were still willing to establish a shared interpretation of the landscape.

Like Dachau, the Eifel had a culture of artists as tourists: taking day trips to the countryside in order to sketch and paint from the landscape and as with the other two chapters Hartung and Wille worked with regional associations in

²² C. Bland and Elisa Müller Adams, 'Sacrifice for the nation' in *Politik in der Literatur von deutschsprachigen Frauen 1780-1918*, Bielefeld, 2007, 5.

order to attract tourists and promote their work.²³ In addition, similar to Dachau and Worpswede, Hartung and Wille were the first artists to become known as predominantly painting this landscape. They helped to create the identity for the Eifel and facilitated marketing the identity that they had established. Once their identity was established for the Eifel, others were able to mirror and expand upon the identity that the artists had formed.

What follows is an introduction to the two artists that shows how they addressed their landscape painting differently to previous generations. Following this is a literature review that shows the excellent biographical work, which has already been published on the Eifel artists. The section 'National style, regional content' is the ensuing discussion about how Hartung and Wille were involved in creating an identity for the region of the Eifel. Subsequently, the present work uses one key example to show how artists used a lake to describe a romanticised version of the Eifel's history. The section '*Die Toten Maar*, myth and reality' describes how authors adopted the artist's established identity and built upon it.

The following two sections: 'The Rhineland's Cultural Expression of National Identity (i)' and 'Marketing the Eifel as the Rural Sublime, a Counterpoint to the Conquered Rhine (ii)' explain how Hartung and Wille inherited a culture of myth-making from previous generations of artists working in the Rhineland and used the Eifel's under-exposure to their advantage by drawing tourists away from the industrialised Rhineland into a perceived sublime idyll.

²³ M. Klütsch, *Die Sammlung von Wille*, Bitburg, 1992, 8.

The artists in the colonies had a widespread reputation, proven by the extensive monographs written about their work during their own lifetimes. In comparison Hartung and Wille did not exhibit their work as extensively as the Dachauers or the Worpsweders. This can of course be partly explained by the fact that as artists working within a group, the latter were able to better collectively market their work. The case will be made here to demonstrate that Wille and Hartung moved away from expressing a purely idealised romantic landscape like their Eifel forbears, Wilhelm Schirmer (1802-1866) and Karl Friedrich Lessing (1808-1880), since they painted site-specific indicators that were geographically inherent to the Eifel. However, Hartung and Wille still used Schirmer and Lessing's stylistic prototype that was both romantic and national. The conception of national and or regional identity in the Eifel is complex; Wille and Hartung were engaged in a contemporary practice in landscape painting, formulating a regional identity for the landscape they depicted but they used a style that was evocative of German romanticism that was interpreted as national. This will be explained here in further detail but German landscape painting had a contemporary interpretation as having nationalistic overtones. As mentioned in the introduction, the focus here is regional identity in the Eifel because the Eifel was a region based in the province of the Rhineland. Furthermore, those paintings that do not depict the villages were of an Eifel that was depicted as dark and dangerous. The Dachauers and the Worpsweders opted for a brighter palette and painted, not only the landscape, but the people who lived there. These were popular with the tourists. By not painting villagers it shows that Wille and Hartung were primarily interested in promoting the landscape rather than the culture. In addition, Hartung painted both the Rhine and the Eifel

landscapes and expressed them in very different ways. His divergent subject matter prevented him from being labelled exclusively as being an artist responsible for one particular identity.

Wille and Hartung's use of the sublime to illustrate the Eifel landscape as bleak and desolate was successful, because the Eifel association's publication and a successful contemporary author adopted it. It will be shown here that Wille and Hartung went beyond copying themes of the early Romantics but used their paintings to both attract the tourist to the region by depicting not only the sublime landscape but towns which were habitable for tourists. As well as attracting the tourist their paintings were bought by visitors as a souvenir of their trip. In the literature review that will follow, authors claim that it was the natural environment itself that was romantic and sublime not the artists' subjective interpretation of it. It will be seen that the identity Wille and Hartung moulded for the Eifel has persisted to this day.

Although successful in their own time, there is little modern literature on the two artists Hartung and Wille. None of the literature that does exist offers a sociological or deeply analytical approach. The artists are presented by regional publishers as examples of artists who painted the scenery in the Rhineland, who had some success in their own lifetimes but are now largely forgotten. This approach negates any sort of sociological analysis except to say that the artists were using the same artistic style as their forbearers at the Düsseldorf Academy. Therefore this chapter is based on primary material found in the archive of the *Eifelverein* in Mayen, which contains the majority of the association's

publications from the turn of the century. The archive also contains published diary entries from tourists. The *Koblenz Stadt Archiv* provided this thesis with contemporary journals, which is where information that charted Wilhelm I's state visit in 1908 to the Eifel region was sourced. The *Mittelrhein Museum* was used extensively for this research, which holds both works by Fritz von Wille and Heinrich Hartung. The Fritz von Wille Museum in Bitburg that exclusively holds a wealth of paintings by the artist also sustained this research. Finally, some of the paintings used in this chapter are from galleries in Koblenz, where works by the artists are still sold.

Most of the secondary literature on the two artists comes from archival research of exhibition catalogues and the *Eifeljahrbuch*, but there are also a few monographs on the artists. Margot Klütsch, the foremost biographer of Fritz von Wille gives an excellent survey of the artist's life and work with a wide-ranging set of high quality reproductions of his work. In her introduction to the catalogue, titled *Fritz von Wille, Von Düsseldorf in die Eifel*, (2006) she assesses the artist as one of the most conservative artists of the Düsseldorf group.²⁴ Klütsch does not examine why the artist was conservative in his work, except to say that he fled reality into the past, into what she calls 'eine feudale, scheinbar heile Welt, in der die traditionellen künstlerischen und sozialen Werte nicht in Frage gestellt werden.'²⁵ The present work intends to take up where Klütsch left off and ask probing questions about Wille's work, such as what is meant by the artist's traditional style. As outlined in the introduction, the art historical approach that will be taken here is what Timothy Clark calls 'the social history of

²⁴M. Klütsch, *Fritz von Wille, Von Düsseldorf in die Eifel*, 2006, 10.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

art' which goes beyond the interpretation of the aesthetic realm of line and colour.²⁶ In this chapter I will look at the myth making of these rural scenes through investigating the political, patriotic, and religious meanings enshrined in the images. In another catalogue edited by her, titled *Die Sammlung von Wille im Haus Beda*, (1992) Klütsch implies that Wille drew the cultural elite of the Rhineland to the Eifel with the success of his paintings.

It is hardly a coincidence that artist Fritz von Wille's phase of artistic maturity and accomplishment came at exactly a time when he started concentrating more intensively on his favourite landscape, the Eifel.²⁷

This chapter builds on Klütsch's excellent biographical material but takes a more socio-political approach. This research concludes that artists and writers have been drawn to the Eifel since 1871 when the train line from Cologne to Trier was established, thus the industrial sector facilitated the leisure industry.²⁸ In addition, Klütsch calls Wille's depiction of the landscape 'poor and bleak'. The present work accepts her criticism but deepens this debate by asking why Wille chose to depict it this way.²⁹ As can be seen more explicitly from the nineteenth century literature, the Eifel had a strong folk culture that pre-dated the artists' work. Wille and Hartung adopted some of these mythical themes in their work and regional journals responded with articles on witchcraft, the history of the poverty of the Eifel and accounts of a violent past. These will be detailed later. Hartung and Wille's work both served and intensified the identity of the Eifel.

²⁶ T. J. Clark, *Image of the People*, 1973, 10-12.

²⁷ M. Klütsch, *Die Sammlung von Wille im Haus Beda Bitburg*, Bitburg, 1992, 26. (Es ist wohl kein Zufall, daß die Phase der künstlerischen Reife und Vollendung Fritz von Wille genau in die Zeit fällt, als der Künstler sich immer intensiver der von ihm bevorzugten Landschaft, der Eifel, zuwendet.)

²⁸ W. Pippke, *Die Eifel*, Cologne, 2004, 37.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 26-27.

The two artists' work came to be the chosen identity with which to attract tourists, a sublime undiscovered treasure.

Marita Cwik-Rosenbach's catalogue, *Fritz von Wille: Bilder der Eifel und Ahr*, (1991) for an exhibition on Wille follows a similar approach to Klütsch. In her introduction to an exhibition of Wille's work, she says that the artist painted the poor, tired and desolate landscape with a homeland feeling (*heimatgefühl*).³⁰ During the early to mid nineteenth century the Eifel was a land rich in raw materials such as iron and coal with a large farming community.³¹ It is not, therefore, the physical landscape which is depleted of nutrients to which the art historian refers but instead, a subjective, cultural expression of the image of the Eifel, informed by its war-torn past and culminated in the painters' artistic expression of the landscape in the nineteenth century. In general, the subjective bleakness of the Eifel region which was built upon by the artists has been enforced by the secondary literature on the artists, such as that written in the *Eifeljahrbuch*. Conrad-Peter Joist's essay, *Maler an den Eifelmaaren*, (1993) on Wille and Hartung also expounds the artist's use of the sublime as if it were the landscape itself which was bleak and not the artist's interpretation. He wrote that every volcanic lake in the Eifel has its own character and gave the example of what became known as the *Totenmaar*.³² As analysis will show, the artists Hartung and Wille painted the volcanic lake several times each, using their own bleak romanticism to successfully create this idea of barrenness and isolation of the Eifel landscape. Klütsch, Cwik-Rosenbach and Joist focus on the artists'

³⁰ M. C. Rosenbach, *Fritz von Wille, Bilder der Eifel und Ahr*, Denau 1991.

³¹ N. Bömmels, *Der Eifel Heft*, No. 7, 'Die Eifeler Eisenindustrie im 19. Jahrhunderts aus Natur und Kultur', Aachen, 1925, 7.

³² C-P, Joist, *Eifeljahrbuch*, 'Maler an den Eifelmaaren', 1993, 29.

bleaker images and classify Wille and Hartung as Romanticists. The study also includes other works which fall outside of the bleak /sublime category and depict postcard perfect towns which are shown sitting in the Eifel valleys as if ready to welcome the paying tourist, this aspect of Wille's painting will be more closely examined here.

There is less literature on Hartung than Wille, as there are only two works that cover the artist's work - they are *Die Koblenzer Künstlerfamilie Hartung* (1965) and *Heinrich Hartung –Maler der Morgensonne und des Frühlings* (1985). *Die Koblenzer Künstlerfamilie Hartung* is a regional publication, published as part of a series of pamphlets about regional culture. Schmitt does not discuss Hartung the elder exclusively but, as the title suggests, covers the whole of the artist's family.³³ The text gives an excellent detailed biographical survey of the artist but its black and white reproductions of paintings are few and of poor quality. Due to the nature of the pamphlet the author relies on a genealogical artistic progression from father to son to give his writing structure, in the same way in which Alfred Barr covers modern art; there is a patriarchal inheritance of artistic technique, criticised for its patriarchal hegemony by Griselda Pollock.³⁴ By its nature, as a regional serial rather than an academic survey, Schmitt's work negates wider criticism and falls short of asking questions about where Hartung's work sat. The title of the second book on Hartung is *Heinrich Hartung – Maler der Morgensonne und des Frühlings* speaks for itself.³⁵ The book offers good quality colour reproductions of the artists' work. The author, Reinhard

³³ R. Schmitt, *Die Koblenzer Künstlerfamilie Hartung*, Neuwied, 1965.

³⁴ G. Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, London, 1988, 50.

³⁵ R. Jansen, *Heinrich Hartung – Maler der Morgensonne und des Frühlings*, Mayen, 1985.

Jansen, explains that Hartung idealised the landscape with a realist twist, painting nature with the exacting detail of a botanist.³⁶ This chapter builds on Jansen's well-researched text but offers a deeper analytical survey of Hartung's work which goes beyond visual analysis. His subject matter of farming communities, isolated chapels and his depiction of the Eifel as largely bereft of industry indicate false truths. Before the nineteenth century the Eifel had indeed been largely bereft of industry but by the time the artists were working there, industry was on the increase.

In a modern guidebook on the Eifel, *Die Eifel* (2004) the author, Walter Pippke, takes the same reading of the Eifel as the art historians have done thus far when they have interpreted Wille's and Hartung's paintings. Pippke suggests that the artists' and authors' interpretation of the landscape in the late nineteenth century was an inevitable outcome of a troubled history.³⁷ He claims that war during the seventeenth century produced a brutal people in the Eifel.³⁸ At the end of his introduction to the history of the Eifel he asserts

Nothing could therefore be further from the truth than the often quoted comment that history has come to a standstill in the Eifel. The truth is that history is just not as apparent here as it is elsewhere. You have to know a lot about the Eifel to see what goes on here.³⁹

In his inherited invention of the Eifel's identity Pippke personifies the landscape as though its social history created a barren landscape. This chapter will show how successful Hartung and Wille were in creating an identity for the Eifel. This

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

³⁷ W. Pippke, *Die Eifel*, Cologne, 2004.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 28. (Nichts ist daher unrichtiger als die oft zitierte Bemerkung in der Eifel sei die Geschichte stumm geworden. Sie zeigt sich nur nicht so offenkundig wie anderswo. Man muss viel über die Eifel wissen, um ihr Vieles anzusehen.)

literature review is testament to their success. Their landscape paintings were more than a product of their influence by the romanticist Düsseldorf School of painting; they chose maudlin themes such as the German Catholic minority, death and ancient ruins to represent the Eifel. They used the Romanticist tradition in the Novalis sense of constantly longing for a homeland which can never be attained, not in the sense of nostalgic longing for the Middle Ages, where artists depict weary knights on horseback returning from a victorious battle as artists from the previous generation had done.⁴⁰

There was also another side to both artists' work that was of accessible villages in the mountain ranges, or neat cottages, depicted particularly by Hartung, in spring. It will become clear that Hartung and Wille's paintings catered perfectly to tourists on a walking holiday, actively seeking to experience the romantic sentiment of estrangement from the world in the safety of the depicted cottage or mountain villages. Central to the argument in this thesis is the contention that their work acted as advertisement and souvenir to the tourist. This chapter seeks to examine how the artists' constructed the Eifel's identity through the use of tourism.

National style, regional content

As stated in the introduction Wille and Hartung's work was a marked departure from the previous generation who had painted the Eifel landscape. One obvious difference between the artists studied in this chapter and their predecessors is

⁴⁰ A. Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, Vol III, London, 1951, 164.

that they used place names in their titles, which according to the *Mittel Rhein Museum* were given to the works by the artists themselves. Lessing and Schirmer used titles which either described a narrative of the scene such as Lessing's *Die Rückkehr der Kreuzfahrer* of 1851 [Fig. 1] and Schirmer's *Der Pfad auf dem Rand des Waldes* of 1851 [Fig. 2] or more generic titles such as Lessing's *Landschaft mit Krähen* of 1830 [Fig. 3]. Not only did both Hartung and Wille use the name Eifel in their titles but were even more specific with titles such as Hartung's *Felsen bei Gerolstein* of 1886 [Fig. 4] or his *Mosenberg in der Eifel* of c.1880 [Fig. 5] or Wille's *Sötenich im Herbst* of 1895 [Fig. 6] or his *Ernte bei Reifferscheid* of 1909 [Fig. 7]. Furthermore, Lessing's *Die Rückkehr der Kreuzfahrer* [Fig. 1] depicts a knight on a horse. This is a more overtly romantic image than Wille's or Hartung's, where the landscape itself is the romanticised subject.

The artistic language of Romanticism was considered national. That Caspar David Friedrich's work was heavily featured in the German National Art exhibition of 1906 is testament to this. William Vaughan describes German Romanticism as quite different to other forms of Romanticism which developed in the nineteenth century in Continental Europe, stating that it had a melancholic tone and often vast in its oppressive expanse.⁴¹ He uses the painting *Monk by the Sea* to illustrate his point [Fig. 1]. The artist depicts the landscape in three separate bands of colour, the beach, the sea and the sky.

⁴¹ W. Vaughan, *Romanticism in Art*, 146

Lessing's image of the knight [Fig. 1] had a strong national identity including, the depiction of a black cross on a white background that adorns his shirt.⁴² Author John Turnbull has identified the Knight as being from the Teutonic Order. Although these knights from the Teutonic State had no regional connection with the Eifel they had a strong national identity. Not only had they received a Charter of Incorporation by the Pope, Frederick the II openly supported their invasions of Hungary and Poland. The previous generation of the history of art in the Eifel was of nationalist landscapes. Hartung and Wille built on the established practice of myth making in the Eifel to inform a national identity but deposited it with a strong element of regional identity as well.

Wille's *Sötenich im Herbst* [Fig. 6] uses a similar dramatic stormy skyline as Lessing and also conveys the drama of the mountains using shadows that keep parts of the landscape in darkness. However, Wille clearly depicts roads and a community – hinting at the traffic links to a romantic landscape that could bring tourists to and from the village and accommodate them. Hartung's landscape titled *Eifel* appears at first to be a bleak and generic landscape of a stony hill. Unlike Lessing and Schirmer, however, Hartung has included the borders of farmland in the background against the free, unpopulated landscape of the Eifel as probably a contrast of landscape sites. Furthermore, Hartung has obviously named the place in his title. It would seem Hartung and Wille used the language of the sublime in which the landscape was the subject and marketed the Eifel as an actual place with a community and thriving agriculture. In this way, it was

⁴² J. Turnbull and R. Hook, *Tannenberg 1410 Disaster for the Teutonic Order Knights*, 8

their style that implied a national basis, even though their subject was actually regional.

Die Toten Maar, myth and reality

The so-called *Totenmaar* exactly describes the national and regional context which the artists employed. The artists enhanced a romanticised version of the lake that was itself a specific place, and not a general interpretation of a romanticised theme. Furthermore, it will be shown here how contributors to the *Eifelverein* publication and Clara Viebig chose to enhance Wille and Hartung's sense of isolation in their paintings and further defined the identity of the Eifel.

There are around sixty volcanoes in the region, forty of which are now volcanic lakes. These are repeated in both the artists' work.⁴³ The rich volcanic ash and the steep verges of the mountains have sustained rare vegetation. This very particular flora and fauna is represented in Wille and Hartung's work. The *Weinfelder Maar* became known as the Lake of the Dead. The lake was given this name because the community of a town called Daun buried their dead in the chapel grounds of its foothills.⁴⁴ In the typical half-truth and myth-making culture of the Romantics the artists and Viebig used the term as though it was essentially the bleakness of the landscape that had inspired the title. Hartung's image shows a sunny day that is not as gloomy as the title suggests and Wille's painting depicts colourful, lively flowers. Later discussion will show how authors embellished an invented sense of morbidity for the mountain.

⁴³ A 'volcanic maar' is a lake in the crater of a volcano

⁴⁴ O. Bauer (ed.), 'Fritz von Wille der Maler der Eifel', M. Klütsch, *Die Arbeitsweise und Wahl der Motive, dargestellt und besonderer Berücksichtigung des Themas 'Weinfelder Maar'*, Daun, 1979, 82.

Hartung's painting is titled *Kapelle am Weinfelder Maar* of 1883. [Fig. 8] A beaten, rocky path leads from the foreground to the illuminated chapel in the background. Both Hartung and Wille depict the chapel with a large tree standing beside it. In Wille's painting the trees are as wide as the chapel and in Hartung's painting the tree is as tall as the chapel spire, putting nature and God on an equal par. In the foreground of Hartung's work is a shepherd with his flock who seems dwarfed and consumed by the landscape as he blends into the mountain he crosses. An article titled *Eine tote Reise* reprinted in the *Eifelvereinsblatt*, originally printed in the *Kölnische Zeitung*, shows how the author embellished the atmosphere of the mountain's bleakness. The author writes that the landscape is lonely and covered with stones, and that it is not hard to imagine that the extinct volcanoes were once exploding with flames.⁴⁵ His language is reflective of the subjective interpretation the artists had suggested with their painted description of the landscape. The author encourages the tourists to visit the mountains and further advertises the artists' vision of the landscape in his dispatch,

Up there on the Eifel mountains, on the broad backbone of the plateau between Manderscheid and the massive corpse of a giant who died countless millennia ago. The enormous limbs lie there stretched out, the impressive head on the bier, visible right up to the outliers of the Rhine, the Mosel and the Luxemburg region. As if holding a wake, the volcanic

⁴⁵ Dronke, (ed.) *Eifelvereinsblatt*, 'Ein toter Riese' November, No. 1, Year 1, 1900, 51-52.

hills of the Vordereifel stand around silent and grave, as if mourning dreadfully for their dead King.⁴⁶

Wille and Hartung were at the height of their careers at around 1900. At this time in another article from the same publication the *Eifelvereinsblatt* continues to intensify the artists' romantic view of the Eifel. It opens with a statement that no one knows where the Eifel is and generally no one has heard of it. It continues to say that even the people who live there use the word *einzig* to describe it.⁴⁷ In a similar vein as the previous article, the author writes as if leading a tourist around the mountains. On the painting titled *Weinfelder Maar* of 1883 [Fig. 9] the author wrote,

Half a dozen footsteps bring us a little way downhill to the village of Manderscheid and the mountains, ruins and the rock cone appear to have sunk once again into nothingness. The "Weinfelder Maar" on the "Mäuseberg" mountains by Daun, offers us another image, unique in itself, of the darkest and "most atmospheric" melancholy. "Maar" is the word used in the local vernacular for the strange, secretive lakes that fill the craters of the formerly volcanic mountains, of which there are a great many in the Eifel; silent, fathomless darkness or deep blue-green water with neither inlet nor runoff and around which an entire series of mythical stories have been woven.⁴⁸

This indicates that the artists helped to fashion a mythical status for a geographical formation. This was enhanced by authors' descriptive terms,

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁴⁷ H. Andrae (ed.), *Eifelvereinsblatt*, No. 5, Yr. 2, May, 1901, 35.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 35 (Ein halbes Dutzend Schritte bringen uns ein wenig abwärts nach Dorf Manderscheid zu, und – Berge, Ruinen, Felskegel – scheinen wieder hin nichts versunken zu sein. Ein anderes, in seiner Art einziges Bild der düstersten "stimmungsvollsten" Melancholie bietet das "Weinfelder Maar" auf dem Mäuseberge bei Daun. "Maar" nennt der Volksmund die merkwürdigen, geheimnisvollen Seen, welche die Krater der ehemals vulkanischen Berge ausfüllen, deren es in der Eifel eine ganze Menge gibt; stille unergründliche schwarze oder tief blaugrüne Wasser, die keinen Zu noch Abfluß [sic.] haben, und um welche Frau Sage eine ganze Märchenreihe gewoben hat.)

'sublime' and 'bleak' in order to directly encourage tourists to venture away from the industrialised Rhineland. The chapel can also be interpreted as indicative of a community and therefore these paintings can be interpreted as an early form of marketing, since this landscape shows that the Eifel could nourish and house prospective tourists.

Artist and author worked together, constructing an identity for the Eifel. Wille produced an image of the lake to illustrate Viebig's collection of short stories titled *Kinder der Eifel*. [Fig. 10] His picture accompanies the story called *Am Totenmaar*. It tells the tale of an innocent girl, who was accused by her father of stealing [Fig.11]. In her anguish she flees her home in winter. Her father realises her innocence and finds her lifeless body in the snow on the valley of the volcano that Wille painted. The author Clara Viebig introduces the story with the following description:

High above in the mountains of the Eifel there is a lake - dark, deep, circular, eerie like an abyss.

Once upon a time, subterranean powers rampaged down there, fire and lava were hurtled to the surface; the basin is now filled with a smooth body of water, like tears in a bowl. The depths of the lake are bottomless.

No trees, no flowers. Bare volcanic heights like giant molehills stand in the form of a wreath, good for nothing except as pathetic pastureland for cattle. Thinly spread stalks of grass blow in the wind, pale buckwheat cowers behind blackberry undergrowth. No bird sings, no butterfly tumbles by. It is lonely and deathly barren.

This is the “Weinfelder Maar” or, as local people call it, the “Totenmaar” (The Dead Lake). Unlike the tears wept into it by the heavens, it has nowhere to flow to. It lies there and dreams and is morbidly unhappy, like everything around it.⁴⁹

Viebig describes the maar as though it was alive and as a powerful force of nature. Her romantic vision of the lake is evidence of the mood that Wille and Hartung capture in their paintings of the lake. Together, artists and author show nature as the sublime and ominous impetus. Any signs of modernity or the region’s inhabitants are not mentioned. Viebig idealises the Eifel as though isolation were something she and her contemporaries aspired to, as if poverty, bleakness and simplicity took precedence over a modern, decadent social order.

A further example of the mirrored vision of author and artist collaborating, can be found in Viebig’s article about Wille, published in the *Eiferein*. She opens with a rhetorical question asking whether or not Wille’s work needs an introduction since it speaks for itself. She asks, ‘Sprechen diese künstlerischen Abbilder unsrer [sic.] lieben Heimat nicht eine laute, tötende Sprache, die jeder, der

⁴⁹ C. Viebig, *Kinder der Eifel*, Berlin, 1897. (Hoch oben in den Eifelbergen liegt ein See, dunkel, tief, kreisrund, unheimlich, wie ein Kraterschlund. Einst tobten unterirdische Gewalten da unten, Feuer und Lavamassen wurden emporgeschleudert; jetzt füllt eine glatte Flut das Becken, wie Tränen eine Schale. Es geht hinunter in bodenlose Tiefe. Keine Bäume, keine Blumen. Nackte vulkanische Höhen, gleich riesigen Maulwurfshügeln, stehen im Kranz, zu nichts gut als zu armseliger Viehweide. Mageres Strandgras weht, blasses Heidekorn duckt [sic.] hinter Brombeergestrüpp. Kein Vogel singt, kein Schmetterling gaukelt. Einsam ist’s, zum Sterben öde. Das ist das Weinfelder Maar, das Totenmaar, wie’s die Leute heißen. Es hat keinen Abfluß, anders als die Tränen, die der Himmel drein weint. Es liegt und träumt und ist todestraurig, wie alles rings umher.)

Augen zu sehen hat, vernimmt tief innen im Herzen?’⁵⁰ She describes Wille’s paintings using each one to trace the cycle of the seasons. As an informed observer of the Eifel environment she recounts when the vegetation that Wille paints blooms and notes which flowers will come later and remarks when the birds start to fly south. At the end of her narrative, which finishes in winter, she writes that the cycle will begin again ‘So knüpft an das fröhliche Ende den fröhlichen Anfang er an. Wie alle Künstler! Und so will auch ich wieder an die Arbeit gehen.’⁵¹ She writes as though the eternal seasons were a constant source of new inspiration. Illustrating the article with a narrative about the seasons, she gives the impression that there is a familiar sense of continuity, which compensates for the vigorous changes that most of Germany was currently experiencing. In her assessment of the painting *Schloss Clef*, she addresses the reader,

The old walls of Clerf Castle, located beyond the pilgrims’ path, also look out of blooming bushes over to the mountain ridge upon which, a hundred years ago, the agitated flock of Eifel peasants dared to confront the plundering French.⁵²

Viebig, therefore, installs a discernable patriotic tone to the article. Sympathising with the farmers, Viebig identifies them as the vulnerable victims of French aggression. The author’s article illustrates the features that typify the regional artists’ work: a focus on the natural landscape and a strong perception

⁵⁰ Ed. R. Zender, C. Viebig, *Der Maler Fritz von Wille* ‘Eifelvereinsblatt’ vol 10, Bonn, 1909, 100.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 103

⁵² *Ibid.*, 102. (Auch das alte Gemäuer des Schlosses Clerf [sic.], abseits von der Wallfahrtstraße, blickt hinaus aus blühenden Büschen hinüber zu dem Bergrücken, auf dem einst vor hundert Jahren di rührende Schar der Eifeler Bäuerlein plündernden Franzosen entgegentreten wagte.)

of pride coupled with a sense of revelling in the divorce of the region from the hedonism of an affluent urban society.

Hartung's *Ideale Eifellandschaft* of 1879, [Fig. 12] shows two travellers wearing backpacks walking up a winding path towards the ruin of a castle circled by birds. It seems the travellers are there to investigate the large ruin that sits on a hill. The significance of walking through the landscape will be examined in further detail later. Hartung depicts a storm brewing. This can be observed in the wind, which blows the trees and the dark clouds, all adding to a heightened sense of drama. The imminent storm is an established artistic method of placing the painting in a particular moment in time, previously used by the Barbizon school of painting - William Turner and John Constable, were exponents of this technique.⁵³ The depicted ruin is a marker of the past. It can be interpreted as an indication of lost wealth or of war, of the successful past of the Eifel's Roman history stretching to the early nineteenth century when Napoleon ordered that all major fortifications should be destroyed. The subject of two tourists walking up the mountain also acts as an advert for the Eifel. As with the other works by Wille and Hartung this painting is traditional in style yet is engaged with a modern commercial process of advertising.

Wille repeats a motif of Catholic shrines in the mountains, one of which can be observed in his work entitled *Mosenburg* or *Mosenberg* of 1909 [Fig. 13]. Over a maar on a volcanic rock a wooden cross stands with a red scarf tied to it blowing in the wind. Crosses in the Eifel landscapes are a recurrent motif of Wille's. There are many different types of crosses that pervade the region but together they represent four main important purposes. Principally they are places to pray.

⁵³ J. Gage and E. Morris, *Constable's Clouds: paintings and cloud studies by John Constable*, Liverpool, 2000, 11 and R. Herbert, *Barbizon Revisited: essay and catalogue*, California, 1962, 63.

While walking through the region, inhabitants of the mountains would pray within the landscape at the crosses as a form of pilgrimage. Taking a practical form, crosses with niches were also used as places to leave the post for the villagers. 'Path-crosses', which also had niches for a light, stood six feet off the ground and were used to signal the path from one village to the next. Finally, those who found it necessary, could seek asylum from society at these points. As in a Church, no harm could come to the accused if one went to a cross.⁵⁴ The matter would have to be resolved without violence, usually concluding with the building of another cross by the accused.⁵⁵ The Eifel's inhabitants placed a great importance on these crosses, demonstrated by the fact that they were built and maintained, not by the Church but, by the public themselves.⁵⁶ The significance of the red scarf in this picture by Wille is that a local villager possibly hung it there. Wille's interpretation of the Eifel's inhabitants and their crosses is not just that these particular crosses are of religious significance but that the landscape was created by God, moreover, the community that lives within the landscape is preserved by God. Wille also uses the crosses as a secure fixing of an established identity. There are around 4,000 crosses in the Eifel region and the first recorded was built there in 1085. Although it is not unique to have stone crosses in the landscape it is certainly unusual to have so many in such a small area. There is an abundance of stone in this volcanic region and the crosses were carved out of this rock.

⁵⁴ ⁵⁴ U. Reinhard, *Wegekreuze als Ausprägung der Volkskunst in Eifel und Moselland*, 'Eifel Jahrbuch' Bonn, 1983, 12-16.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵⁶ Pracht, *Tänze, Todt und Teuffel*, 2.

Mosenberg or *Mosenburg* [Fig. 13] also depicts plants specific to the Eifel e.g. broom bushes and juniper plants, which typically grow in the barren lime soil of the volcanic Eifel verges. On the opposite hill there is another destroyed fortification. Hartung repeatedly painted the ruins with tourists venturing off to discover them, whereas Wille's typical recurring motif were the Eifel lakes. Contemporary scientists claimed that each one has a unique character, which could partly explain Wille's fascination with them. Again, there are no people in this landscape, only two birds in the sky. Isolation and angst seem to pervade Hartung's and Wille's paintings of the Eifel. Nature is all encompassing and even threatening. Their work does not just deny industrialization but defies it, suggesting that nature and God still remain all-powerful. Although remote, the Eifel was not untouched by the industrial revolution. The Eifel, once rich in iron and lead deposits, was mined to near extinction in the early nineteenth century. In the race to industrialize, many of the Eifel's coniferous forests were destroyed for the coal industry.⁵⁷

Fritz von Wille's Romanticism received at a national level

It was the painting *Die Blaue Blume* of 1908 [Fig. 14] that brought Fritz von Wille the most acclaim and caught the attention of the nation when it was bought by German expansionist, Emperor Wilhelm II. It is a painting that engages with German nationalism more directly than his other work. The painting is a view of

⁵⁷ W. Pippke, *Die Eifel*, Hamburg, 2009, 28.

The mountainous Eifel landscape itself, the artist's prime inspiration. Its strong sense of spirituality is represented in nature through a small chapel that seems to organically rise up from the ground, securely encompassed by a circle of trees. Characteristically of the artist, it shows no trace of industrialisation, this view appears to be timeless. The foreground is illuminated by the scatterings of white and yellow flowers but the eye is drawn to the background by dark blue cornflowers which snake up the valley and become denser the closer they get to the rural Chapel. The sky is ominous with dark and heavy clouds. The narrow path winds up the valley between two mountain ranges and leads the would-be Catholics to the darkened Chapel. This is the only mark of civilisation depicted in the painting. Wilhelm II bought *Die Blaue Blume* after it was displayed at the *Große Berliner Kunstschau* in 1908, having visited the region to erect a monument. Contemporary sources state that he was viewed as benefactor and promoter of the Eifel region. It is suggested here that what appealed to the Emperor is not necessarily the artistic flair of the painting but its subject matter. The title *Die Blaue Blume* refers to the blue flowers, which were the habitual symbol of longing employed by the early romantics.

The author, known as Novalis (1772-1801) was the first to use this symbol in his work *Henry von Ofterdingen*. He wrote about a young man learning philosophy on a journey in search of his own identity and a blue flower, which he inevitably fails to find. The symbol particularly appealed to those living in exile who longed to return to their homeland and see the blue flowers once more. Wilhelm took the painting with him when he went into exile after the failure of WW1. Wille attempts to engage a sense of the sublime and a longing to be in the Eifel. Wille

was fervently drawn to the Eifel region where he had lived most of his life and specifically requested to be buried there.

The unattainable longing could also refer to the desire for Germany to return to a less complicated, pre-industrial time, when Christians lived closer to nature and therefore, as seen through this pantheistic vision, closer to God. Both Wille and Hartung repeated images such as the death maar in an attempt to come closer to expressing the sublime. Offerdingen's journey through the wilderness is an equivalent example of a painful journey that can have no ending because the sublime can never be reached. From a colonialist perspective the views of the Eifel landscape by both artists indicate a cultural hegemony over land. There is a general unending element to their work as the artists highlight the vastness of the land by depicting the next mountain range that could lead the would-be colonialist ever further into the land.

Wilhelm II himself believed that art had the potential to help establish a national identity. In the late nineteenth century he attempted to instate a close advisor of his, Anton von Werner, in the place of Hugo von Tschudi as director of the Berlin National Gallery. Tschudi once stated that nationalism had no place in art and regularly displayed the work of foreign artists.⁵⁸ Wilhelm's wish was to instate Werner and directly influence the development of the German art through the collection at the national gallery.⁵⁹ His move was unsuccessful but demonstrates the Emperor's serious intentions to attempt to nationalise art. A contemporary

⁵⁸ P. Paret, 'The Tschudi Affair', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. III December 1981.

⁵⁹ P. Paret, *German Encounters with Modernism 1840-1945*, New York, 2000, 100-105.

landscape painting of Paul Cézanne's titled *Mount Sainte-Victoire* of 1906 [Fig. 15] executed two years before the sale of Wille's picture, shows an abstracted landscape of geometric forms. The way in which Cézanne renders the mountain is contrary to Wille's conventional, naturalistic style. According to the art historian Peter Paret, Wilhelm II viewed modern art with suspicion because he associated it with French art and therefore believed it threatened monarchical values.⁶⁰ Therefore, this painting offered Wilhelm II both a regional (and national) subject and a national style.

Despite the suggestion that Wille spent much of his time in the backwoods of the Eifel, he exhibited internationally and worked as a Professor at the Düsseldorf Academy. His conformist style is not therefore fortuitous but a conscious snub of modern but more importantly, French art. In order to grasp the significance of Wille and his contemporaries' work one must first appreciate how the identity of the Eifel developed and how the artists helped to create it. The Eifel's identity developed out of an 'otherness' to that of the over industrialised Rhineland. Therefore, in a deconstruction of the identity that the artists helped to create, it is important to study the already strongly established national identity that was represented through art and culture. Subsequently, I will concentrate more specifically on the development of the Eifel's identity by focusing largely on the publications by the region's *Eifelverein*, with which the artists worked closely.

The Rhineland's Cultural Expression of National Identity (i)

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 102.

The Rhineland has long since been a cultural battleground for German national identity. The Rhine's national identity was expressed culturally through sculpture, poetry, myth and the financial success of industry. Hartung painted two opposing subject matters which both relied on cultural myth making in order to create a sense of identity for the Rhineland and the Eifel. The two will be studied here not as mutually exclusive but as reliant on each other to endorse the other's sense of demanding commerce or of various guises of isolation.

The Eifel region is on the west side of the Rhineland closest to the French border. The Rhine, which lies further to the east, flows through the length of Germany and into France, enjoyed its cultural zenith during the early nineteenth century.⁶¹ It was seen as a supremely German river, significant industrially and culturally. At the beginning of the nineteenth century many romantic authors based their lyrical writings here. Artists were inspired by the real threat to a safe passage on this waterway, which fuelled a sense of danger and myth. During the second half of the century it became polluted and over popularised. The demise of the river's romantic status followed. The Eifel region offered artists the same enforced sense of identity due to the proximity of the French, as well as the opportunity to depict a place in the then heavily polluted Rhineland which was largely unaffected by the industrial revolution. Finally, a similarly stunning mountain range and collective Roman history attracted the second wave of romantics away from the Rhine and into the Eifel region.

⁶¹ It is the Rhine rather than the Danube which is of focus here because the Rhine flows from the north to the South and therefore shares the longer part of the border with France. The Danube flows from Bavaria from West to East.

Before a more thorough review of painting in the Eifel can be analysed, there must be an examination of the Rhine. The community that had created the culture of national identity with the river Rhine at its heart also encouraged the regional identity created by Hartung and Wille. These two different identities are understood here to be mutually dependent. Regional identity is not interpreted here as a reaction against the national identity of the Rhineland. Instead it is viewed as part of the ethos of myth making. This was formative to Germany's building its own identity.

The Rhineland's shared border between France and Germany has frequently been a source of discontent but never more so than at the beginning of the nineteenth century after the Napoleonic wars, when the province was occupied by the French. The Confederation of the Rhine (1806-1813) was the outcome of the Battle of Austerlitz and concluded in the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire.⁶² Smaller states were absorbed into larger ones and the Rhineland came under Bavarian rule. This gave rise to a resistance movement and nostalgic longing for a time before the French arrived. (In reality, however, occupation of the French did much to transform the Province in the early part of the century, catapulting it from a backward agrarian country into the industrial era.⁶³) Resistance to the enforced French Catholicism upon the Protestant region affected much of the artistic output at this time. These first wave romantics produced nostalgic landscape imagery that harked back to the past before the French invaded. Catholicism continued to divide the region in the late nineteenth century when Bismarck created a cultural battle against the Catholics

⁶² D. Blackbourn, *History of Germany 1780-1918: The long nineteenth century*, Oxford, 1997, 48.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 54.

supported by the Rhineland's Protestant National Liberal Party.⁶⁴ This subsequently fuelled growth to the Catholic supported Social Democrat Party and left a bitter relationship between the Catholics and the Government.⁶⁵ Lekan argues that these rifts served to reinforce the plight of the *Heimat* movement in the Rhineland to create a collective identity.⁶⁶ Much of this collective identity was focused on the river Rhine and its famous geographical sites and monuments, including the Loreley rock, where the Rhine meets the Danube and the Mosel River. It was a key source of inspiration for the early nineteenth century poets, writers and of course, artists. This point in the Rhine is particularly dramatic with inherent dangers, giving rise to a closely guarded sense of myth in the area.

At the Loreley, the Rhine is over 20 metres deep and there are high cliffs and sharp bends together with regularly occurring dangerous whirlpool formations all of which have contributed to the areas' dangerous reputation.⁶⁷ There are two women who supposedly keep watch over the Rhine, one is the myth of the Loreley and the other is Germania. They were both subjects of the patriotic songs of the time.⁶⁸ The potential physical dangers of the Rhineland gave rise to the myth of a woman who was rejected by her lover and drowned herself in the river. The myth goes that she subsequently sat on the Loreley rock, contemplating her fate and cursing the sailors' journey along the river. When

⁶⁴ T. Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature*, London, 2004, 23.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 24.

⁶⁷ M. Cioc, *The Rhine*, London, 2005, 109.

⁶⁸ E. Müller-Adams, Conference Paper, *Father Rhine and his Daughter(s): Clemens Brentano's "Rheinmärchen" (1811) and the Creation of a National Myth*, The Voice of the People. The European Folk Revival 1760-1914, 08/09/2007, Sheffield University.

depicted in paintings she has stereotypical Germanic looks with long blonde hair and blue eyes. The other woman who watches over the Rhine is equally vengeful with a similar appearance. She, however, is not just a myth pervading songs and stories of the nineteenth century; she exists in stone. The commission for the Niederwald Monument was ordered by Kaiser Wilhelm II and the monument was erected in 1882. She takes the form of Germania. She is the representation of Germany as a female warrior with long flowing blonde hair, complete with sword and breast-plate. Germania stood on the German side of the Rhine looking towards France. The monument was erected to celebrate the defeat of the French by Prussia and the subsequent establishment of the Second Empire. Germania and the myth of the Loreley were used to threaten the French. If they were to invade again they would have to cross the Rhine's dangerous waters and disturb the two women who guarded it.

Heinrich Hartung's painting *Die Loreley* [Fig. 16] does not attempt to disguise the fact that the river was industrialised. He depicts several steam ships navigating the waters. He also shows the walled embankment built to house the train line. Hartung's landscapes of the Rhine are of the 'tamed sublime'. He shows the dangerous rugged landscape disciplined through industry. His Eifel landscapes, however, lack borders, walls and often paths and therefore reflect the 'romanticised sublime'. Wille and Hartung were the third generation of sublime artists and not unlike the work of the early romantic Caspar David Friedrich. The people in Friedrich's work seem detached from the landscape in a way that Wille's and Hartung's are not. Similarly, however, all three artists largely depict their landscapes as transcendental and perilous. In a

contemporary article on the artist the author notes Hartung's expression of the sublime in his landscapes when he wrote the following.

In a time when the Rhine and the Mosel were transformed into streams of perfume by films and songs, in which the cable cars seemed to be the only way to bring people closer to this land, Hartung was the preserver of these landscapes, of their austere, lonely and intensely poetic beauty. Whether you stand before the winter landscapes of the Lower Rhine, the sun shining bleakly through the snowy clouds transforming cloud and air into a single gentle brilliance; whether you see the clouds grow out of the blue heavens and wander across the sunny grey and blue of the mountains or you look from out of a barge in the shady bay over to the church illuminated by the bright sunshine towards the island of Niederwerth or, from high on the mountain-tops, down to Koblenz with its many towers. Always, you not only find yourself before pictures of outstanding landscape painting, but also before portraits of a landscape that can only be created in such verity, such modernity and in such a depth of feeling by a gifted painter!⁶⁹

⁶⁹ K. Eitelbach, 'Heinrich Hartung', *Rheinische Zeitung*, nr. 144, 24/06/1895. (In einer Zeit, die Rhein und Mosel durch Filme und Lieder in Ströme von Parfüm verwandelt, der Seilbahnen die einzige Möglichkeit scheinen, den Menschen näher an dieses Land heranzuführen, ist Hartung der Bewahrer dieser Landschaften, ihrer herben, einsamen, tieflyrischen Schönheit. Ob man vor seinen niederrheinischen Winterlandschaften steht, durch deren Schneegewölk die Sonne dunstet und Wolke und Luft in einen einzigen milden Glanz verwandelt, ob man seine Wolken aus dem blauen Himmel wachsen und über das sonnige Grau und Blau der Berge wandern sieht oder aus dem Kahn in schattiger Bucht zu der sonnenbeleuchten Kirche auf der Insel Niederwerth hinüberschaut oder hoch von den Bergen auf das turmreiche Koblenz Herabblickt: Immer steht man nicht nur vor Bildern bedeutsamer Landschaftsmalerei, sondern vor Porträts eine Landschaft, wie sie in solcher Wahrheit, solcher Modernität, solcher Stimmungstiefe nur ein begnadeter Maler zu gestalten vermag!)

In 1813, the author, Ernst Moritz Arndt wrote his acclaimed 'Der Rhein, Teutschlands Strom, aber nicht Teutschlands Gränze' that conceives of the Rhine flowing from north to south through the body of the fatherland.⁷⁰ Before the Confederation of the Rhine the west bank of the river belonged to Germany and not France, Arndt's indicative title challenges this tenure. Arndt wrote about the river at a time when tourism in the Rhineland had already reached a peak. Nature preservationists resented the over-commercialisation of the region, claiming that railways, advertising, hotels and souvenir shops had demeaned the significance of the area, fuelling campaigns against the destruction of the environment.⁷¹ Despite the negative effects of tourism it fired a sense of nationalism and informed regional pride in the province, reinforcing myth and memory, in the Anthony D. Smith sense.⁷²

During the 1890s Wilhelm II utilised this natural sense of regional pride in the Rhineland and began rebuilding and commissioning new churches in the national 'Germanic', Gothic style. He also commissioned a giant monument of himself sat atop a horse in Koblenz where both the Rhine and the Mosel meet, the point is known as the *Deutsche Eck*. The Rhineland developed a strong national identity through opposition to the French, opposition to the government and intense tourism, created both naturally and through the Kaiser's engineering.⁷³ However, its romantic appeal was waning. The Romantics of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries would have struggled to recognise

⁷⁰ E. M. Arndt, *Der Rhein, Teutschlands Strom, nicht aber Teutschlands Grenze*, 1813

⁷¹ M. Cioc, *The Rhine: And Eco-Biography*, Washington, 2002, 96

⁷² A. D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, Oxford, 1999, 14-15.

⁷³ T. Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature*, 30

the river in the late nineteenth century. The Rhine by then had become one of the most polluted rivers in Europe due to industrial waste and human intervention. In 1813 a civil engineer was commissioned to straighten the Rhine, for commercial purposes, which had devastating effects on the environment.⁷⁴ The Rhine Commission removed natural flood plains and tributaries upsetting the river's delicate natural balance. The ecological impact was severe, causing one parliamentarian at the turn of the century to call it 'the river of hell'.⁷⁵ Industrialisation had brought workers from agricultural regions to cities in search of a higher wage. Germany's population was booming in the cities but not in isolated agricultural regions such as the Eifel whose population had barely changed.⁷⁶ The need for artists to find another area to take their inspiration from was clear.

The Eifel region had not experienced the economic boom that industrial Germany was undergoing and subsequently did not suffer from the same pollution levels and was certainly not as commercialised.⁷⁷ Views of its two million year old volcanoes and two thousand year old Roman ruins signalled an unchanging world when so much of Germany was experiencing an unprecedented socio-economic transformation. In the earlier part of the century artists based themselves around the Rhine. Once it became over industrialised the new artists moved to Eifel as a more desirable location. Once there, artists began to promote its countryside and form its identity, in an attempt to attract an art buying public.

⁷⁴ M. Cioc, *The Rhine*, xix.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁷⁶ Hermann, *Eifel-Festschrift 1888-1913*, 5.

⁷⁷ N. Bömmels, 'Aus Natur und Kultur der Eifel', *Die Eifeler Eisenindustrie im 19. Jahrhundert*, No. 7, Aachen, 1925, 7.

Marketing the Eifel as the Rural Sublime, a Counterpoint to the Conquered Rhine

(ii)

Wille and Hartung adopted the established myth-making culture of the nineteenth century which had so heavily dominated the work in the Rhineland and supplanted it in the Eifel. While Wille chose to exclusively work from the Eifel in order to continue to paint a romanticised view of the Rhineland, Hartung took the unusual step of promoting both the identity of his bleak Eifel and the industrial Rhine. In addition to Hartung's oil landscapes of the Eifel region, the artist painted in watercolours in postcard or beer mat format.⁷⁸ Hartung's work was used by a *sekt* company situated in Koblenz called *Dienhard*, to advertise their product on posters.⁷⁹ The painting featured an industrial view of the Rhine, complete with steam ships, at *Ehrenbreitstein*.⁸⁰ Through his cheap and accessible pictures for the benefit of tourists and locals alike, Hartung also fostered the bleak sense of identity for the Eifel. Unlike Wille, the artist celebrated the industrialisation of his hometown, Koblenz. Düsseldorf itself, experienced something of a revival during the 1890s as its population doubled from the previous decade with the growth of industry and was therefore a relatively modern city at this time.⁸¹ The Eifel's neighbouring industrialised towns provided the countryside with the opportunity to market itself to those who had fled their hometowns and villages in search of work.

⁷⁸ R. Schmitt, *Die Koblenzer Künstlerfamilie Hartung*, Neuwied, 1965, 13.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸¹ Berman, Sheri, 1965- *Modernization in Historical Perspective: The Case of Imperial Germany* World Politics - Volume 53, Number 3, April 2001, 431-46.2

Wille and Hartung propagated a sense of identity for the Eifel which was of a bleak and barren place. As previously shown the author Viebig adopted the identity that they had helped to create for the Eifel and replicated it in her work. She even worked directly with Wille as he illustrated one of her books⁸², and she wrote an article on the artist in the *Eifelvereinsblatt*.⁸³ The *Eifelverein* began to adopt the same identity that the artists had created in their journal. Wille worked directly with the *Verein* when at the pinnacle of his career as the *Eifelbilder*. Wille endorsed the *Eifelverein's* 25 year jubilee with one of his paintings of the indigenous volcanic lakes on the front cover of the commemorative publication.⁸⁴ Wille collaborated with the *Verein* to express an image of the Eifel as a romantic sublime landscape. As will be seen here they regularly used his reproductions to illustrate the journal, therefore compounding his own myth making about the Eifel.

The first publication of the *Eifelvereinsblatt* was in 1888. Unlike the other regional publications studied in Dachau and Worpswede, the opening address to its members overtly states that the Eifel needs to attract tourists and industry in order to boost the economy and that this was the mission statement of the association.⁸⁵ The founder of the association, Dr Dronke, writes

Descriptions of especially worthwhile walks in the Eifel region, allusions to newly created forms of transport, to newly formed pathways, etc. will increase the number of visitors from other places and encourage

⁸² C. Viebig, *Kinder der Eifel*, Berlin, 1920.

⁸³ R. Zender (ed.), *Eifelvereinsblatt*, Viebig, 'Der Eifelmaer Fritz von Wille', No. 10, Bonn, 1909.

⁸⁴ A. Herrmann (ed.), *Eifel Festschrift zur 25 jährigen Jubelfeier des Eifelvereins*, Bonn, 1913.

⁸⁵ Dronke, *Eifelvereinsblatt*, No. 1, Yr. 1, January, 1900, 1.

wanderlust, and discussions about the economy will help promote agriculture and industry.⁸⁶

In the previous section the author states an awareness of the importance of nature conservation, yet continues here with an understanding of the importance of bringing tourism and therefore fostering industry in the region since both will satisfy an economic need in the Eifel. This is an important factor when considering how the publication promoted both the artists, Hartung and Wille, and the natural environment. As will be investigated here, authors describe the Eifel as awesome in its beauty in order to encourage tourists but simultaneously there is a subtext; the Eifel was rich in iron ore and coal and open to offers from capitalists in industry. Authors were keen to promote an identity for the Eifel, which celebrated its peculiarities claiming that it was a place unlike any other.⁸⁷ The *Eifelverein* set out to actively promote tourism from its outset. There was already an existing set of *Verschönerungsvereine* in the Eifel when the *Eifelverein* was established so, Dr. Dronke amalgamated them so that they could collectively advertise, publish guides, build monuments, carry out research on regional flora and fauna and establish cohesive signposting.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the *Verein* organised exhibitions of the paintings and photographs of the Eifel landscape, including an exhibition specifically of Fritz von Wille's work.⁸⁹ Wille's and Heinrich Hartung's landscapes came to define how the *Eifelverein* propagated their sense of identity. Initially the publication was unsure about how to define its landscape but by 1905 authors were using adjectives such as

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 1. (Beschreibung von besonders lohnenden Wanderungen im Eifelgebiet, Hinweise auf neugeschaffene Verkehrsmittel, auf neuangelegte Wege u.s.w. werden den Fremdenbesuch und die Wanderlust heben und Besprechungen wirtschaftlichen Inhaltes die Landwirtschaft und Industrie fördern helfen.)

⁸⁷ H. Andrae (ed.) *Eifelvereinsblatt*, Nr. 2, Yr. 2, December, 1900, 59.

⁸⁸ A. Hermann, (ed.) *Eifel-Festschrift 1888-1914*, 1913, Bonn, 11 and 22.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 15 and 33.

poor, desolate, bleak and raw. It will be shown that Hartung and Wille had depicted the Eifel in the same way, in a romantic, sublime tradition.⁹⁰

The author of a history of the *Eifelverein* describes the Eifel landscape, in a publication by the *Verein*, 'sie war ja so verschrien als unwegsam, dürftig und kahl, so gänzlich unbekannt in ihren landschaftlichen Reizen!'⁹¹ During the eve of the First World War, authors in the *Verein* reflected the themes that Wille and Hartung had been using since the 1880s to interpret the Eifel landscape.

The artists' interest in this particular region is not exceptional. In the nineteenth century the region attracted romantic poets, scientists and walking groups alike. The most well known text is Ernst Moritz Arndt's *Rhein und Ahr-Wanderungen* (1842). Wille's and Hartung's interpretation of the Eifel owes much to Arndt's version. In his text he wrote that

Here, one is already at the start of the actual Eifel region, to which funnily enough nobody wants to belong, because the people there are notorious for their wild and rough nature: everyone pushes the Eifel as far away as possible from himself, as if he were dealing with a cursed or even damned desert; just as the neighbours vehemently reject the name "Schwab" because of the ill-reputed stupidity of the Swabians.⁹²

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 5.

⁹² E. M. Arndt, *Rhein- und Ahr- Wanderungen*, Bonn, 1846, 186. (Hier ist man also nun schon in dem Anfange der eigentlichen Eifel, wozu wunderlich genug kein Mensch gehören will, als die da wegen ihrer Wildheit und Rauigkeit übel berüchtigt sein: denn jeder schiebt die Eifel gern so weit als möglich von sich, als wenn von einer ungesegneten oder gar von einer versegneten Wüste die Rede wäre (sic.); grade (sic.) wie die Nachbarn der Schwaben wegen der ver-schrienen (sic.) Schwabendummheit den Namen Schwab immer mit aller Leibesgewalt von sich schieben.)

Arndt proclaims that no one wants to live in the Eifel and goes on to say that he had a discussion with someone living in the Eifel who refused to confirm that he lived there. The author claims that the Eifel is such a wild place no one wanted to admit that they actually live there.⁹³ Hartung and Wille adopted Arndt's interpretation of the landscape to a degree and built upon it. The Eifel was poverty stricken for much of the nineteenth century, however. In a modern guidebook Walter Pippke calls the Eifel the poor house of the nation and writes that disregard for the Eifel was not unusual given the region's experiences of war and famine.⁹⁴ The Eifel's desperate financial situation, however, was not unique. The whole of the agrarian Rhineland was affected by a series of poor harvests unaided by Bavarian rule. The uneasy relationship between the Rhineland and Bavaria due to religious differences meant that Bavaria gave no financial support to the Rhineland during the early nineteenth century and continued to heavily tax its exports.

More particular to the Eifel and therefore more significant to Hartung and Wille's development of identity, was its reported demonization of women during the Middle Ages. It was in Arndt's wanderings where it seems it was first acclaimed that the Eifel was 'ridden with the devil'.⁹⁵ Folk magazines such as Heinrich Schmitz's *Sagen und Legeden des Eifeler Volkes* (1858) have been keen to mirror Arndt's romanticised versions of history in which the devil and the Eifel are claimed to have made a pact.⁹⁶ Contemporary research upholds this assertion;

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁹⁴ Hermann, *Eifelfestschrift*, 1913, 18.

⁹⁵ Arndt, *Rhein und Ahr Wanderungen*, 128

⁹⁶ H. J. Schmitz (ed.) *Sagen und Legenden des Eifeler Volkes*, Trier, 1858.

witch-hunts, reportedly, reached a critical peak in the sixteenth century when over 10,000 women were tortured or killed.⁹⁷

Violence on a larger scale was experienced in the Eifel, as war raged in the region for more than two hundred years, beginning in the sixteenth century and ending with Napoleon's invasion. The region's many fortifications were ordered to be demolished by the French, which is why there are so many damaged castles in the area. As will be seen later, these subjects are recorded in both Wille and Hartung's paintings. Contemporary folk tales mention good and bad fairies, the plight of brave soldiers, the wealth of the past with its rigidly hierarchical society and depicts nature as beautiful and powerful but cruel.⁹⁸ A contemporary writer on Wille picked up on the Eifel's history of violence in connection with the artists' landscapes when he went as far as to claim that Wille was not unlike a history painter:

However, while he who was at the same time a historical painter populating his Eifel landscapes with soldiers from the Thirty Years' War, allowing villages and churches to be burned to the ground, the modern painter Wille rejected any means that sought to bedight the romantic that already exists in nature.⁹⁹

Wille and Hartung reflected and enhanced the myth making of danger and violence through the use of the sublime in their work in order to create the

⁹⁷P. Pracht, *Tänze, Todt und Teuffel: die grausame spur der Hexenverolgung in der Eifel*, Aachen, 1993, 3.

⁹⁸K. Macquid and G. Macquid, *The Volcanic Eifel*, London, 1896, 1-14.

⁹⁹F. Wille and K. Perfall, *Die Eifel Wechsel der Jahrzeiten*, Cologne, 1914, 2. (Während aber dieser, der zugleich Historienmaler war, seine Eifellandschaften mit Soldaten aus dem Dreißigjährigen Kriege ausschmückte, Dörfer und Kirchen brennen ließ, verzichtete der moderne Wille auf solche und ähnliche Mittel, die schon in der Natur gegebene Romantik noch besonders aufzuputzen.)

Eifel's austere identity. Both the endemic rock formations and the region's long history of violence have helped to create a mythological view of the Eifel by poets and artists who sought to idealise the region for their own reasons. In an illustrated book of Wille's paintings published by the artist himself and the author and art critic Karl von Perfall, the author explains the attraction of the Eifel. He writes that interest in the landscape itself has drawn people to it, with its natural beauty, ancient volcanoes and Roman ruins. He writes that the melancholy of the landscape attracted artists and poets, whose work in turn attracted walking groups and tourists. Perfall observes that artists were attracted by the hushed power of the forests and their constantly changing colours. Perfall's language is romantic and morose, referring to the forests as serious and atmospheric. He writes about the Eifel's industry, nature, artists and poets all with a sense of pride and finishes the text by stating that the Eifel association thrived because its inhabitants wished to protect their fatherland.¹⁰⁰ Briefly touching on the French occupation the text reads as an instructive history of the Eifel. Informing the reader about the region's long, eventful past and inspiring landscape, before viewing Wille's illustrations, gives a cultural framework within which to analyse his paintings. The artist obviously endorsed this interpretation of his work given that the book was jointly published by the artist and Perfall. Thus, supporting the argument that these paintings of the Eifel were not merely intended to aesthetically please the viewer but Wille also sought to educate the viewer through his own subjective creation of the Eifel's identity and promote the Eifel to potential tourists. Furthermore, the partisan rhetoric throughout the text demonstrates the artists' desire to align himself

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, 1-2.

with this specific district. A travel writer with fables and legends about magical fairies, invented in the nineteenth century, wrote in 1896:

Deep, beautiful woods are everywhere, like lakes of waving greenery, and, in them, forest trees are almost as frequent as the tall sombre pines. Wild flowers and ferns, some of a rare kind, are plentiful, especially near Gerolstein and Manderscheid; their brilliant luxuriance is in strong contrast with the weird volcanoes and masses of deposit protruding in fantastic form from the broken side of a crater, and with the ruined castles which often crown the once fiery hills.... So much of the country is either wooded or cultivated, that it is difficult to imagine the chaos that reigned in the Eifel, when volcanoes flamed there.¹⁰¹

How residents viewed the Eifel and the value that the inhabitants placed on their homeland, at the time that Hartung and Wille were actively forming its identity, is probably best epitomised by the Eifel Association and its publication.¹⁰² Significantly, Wille was a founding member of this association which promoted the Eifel's history, whose mission statement, outlined in its first publication, promotes research into the area on everything from its regional industry, to its Roman ruins, to the vegetation the region sustained. This, the paper claims, will bring the reader closer to an understanding of their native Fatherland.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ K. Macquid and G. Macquid, *The Volcanic Eifel*, London, 1896, 7-8.

¹⁰² Eifel Association

¹⁰³ H. Andrae, 'Werte Mitglieder des Eifelvereins, liebe Freunde', *Eifelvereinsblatt*, No. 1, January, 1 (Burgbrohl, 1900)

As well as informing local people about their land, one of the chief objectives of the paper was to improve the region's dwindling economic status. Landscape, science and economy are stated as the paper's staple in the first publication.¹⁰⁴ The association member General von Voigt, worked on maintaining financial development in the Eifel as his role within the association. He claimed that developing the region's natural resources as well as the promotion of tourism, would help to stabilise the economic situation.¹⁰⁵ Under Voigt's directorship, which began in 1904 and lasted for ten years, the number of members of the association climbed dramatically from 3,700 to 20,000. Presumably, this was due to his noted financial savvy coupled with an increased interest in regional identity. Voigt and the founder of the association, Dr. Donke, also personally helped finance the paper underscoring the premise that the association was not just a capitalist venture but had its roots in a native sense of pride.¹⁰⁶ Acting as cultural ambassadors Wille's and Hartung's reproductions both featured in this paper, instructing tourists and regional people about the natural wealth and culture that the region has to offer. The sales of the papers assisted the financing of small guidebooks published by the Eifel association. In 1909 an advert appeared for a guidebook on places to swim in the area. A copy of an image that is unmistakably a reproduction of Wille's *Weinfelder Maar* (which he used as a subject time and again), adorns the cover [Fig. 17].

The artist clearly marketed his work towards the tourists in the summer months, given that this edition was printed in the middle of June. An issue in 1912 advertises four tourist guides to those who wish to discover the region's walking

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁰⁵ M. Zender, *Eifel-festschrift zur 25 jährigen Jubelfeier des Eifelvereins*, Eifelverein, Bonn, 1913, 7.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

paths. Clearly Wille endorses tourism as a way of benefitting his own career, by raising his profile and furthering his reputation as *der Eifelmaler*. Wille and Hartung started their Eifel series' thirty years before the establishment of the *Eifelverein*. The artists had established a framework which the association could focus on and therefore created an identity for the Eifel which concentrated on its Roman past, the rare heathers of the region, and the volcanoes. The 1913 jubilee publication by the association discusses the Eifel's heather, its Roman past and its volcanoes.¹⁰⁷

The *Eifelvereinsblatt* frequently advertised walking tours, offering visits to historical houses, Roman ruins and trips through forests, just as Hartung had depicted walkers in his paintings. One such publication pictures over fifty members of the association at the German Dutch border, having walked from the Eifel to their destination. The same publication also pictures a group of a similar size laying the founding stone for a viewing tower. The author also informs the reader that new path signs have been erected, opening up the possibility for walkers to take different routes, coupled with the consignment of 103 new benches.¹⁰⁸ [Fig. 18] Walking through the landscape was seen as an act of reclaiming the land in Germany. German scholar Scott Moranda writes that 'Groups could construct signs and landmarks to label a landscape as theirs, but they could also introduce human "markers"'.¹⁰⁹ He writes that just through walking through the landscape the hiker could assert an important accord with their national soil. The Eifel's contested border with France gives the walking

¹⁰⁷ A. Hermann, *Eifel Festschrift 1888-1913*, 166-185 (heather), 124-151 (volcanoes), 215-246 (the Romans)

¹⁰⁸ *Eifelvereinsblatt*, No. 10, Bonn, 1909, 74

¹⁰⁹ S. Moranda, *Maps, Markers and Bodies: Hikers Constructing the Nation in German Forests*, The Nationalism Project, Madison, 2001. (This is an academic, peer reviewed online resource. See www.nationalismproject.org)

groups political substance; whilst walking through the landscape they were taking ownership of it. Clara Viebig mentions, in the following article, that she and Wille understood the landscape and that they had both walked through it with the same vision of it. In her following description of the landscape and Wille's work she illustrates a collective ownership over the Eifel. She writes

Do these artistic images of our lovely homeland not speak to us with their loud and sonorous voice which anyone who has eyes to see hears deep in his heart? There is nothing I have to say with my pen that Wille would not have expressed with the paintbrush. We wandered through the Eifel, both with the same eyes that had been opened by our love of the land; God gave us a heart with which to recognise the beauty of this world: what abundance in this poverty, what splendour in this humbleness, what poetry in this barren land!¹¹⁰

Hartung and Wille were able to create an identity for the Eifel region by using signifiers of place in name and subject. Simultaneously they were consciously engaged in advertising the region to tourists. In stark contrast to the neighbouring Rhine, which was by now showing serious consequences of intense industrialization, the Eifel was marketed as raw and natural but with a wealth of history to attract the visitor. The identity the artists fostered was mirrored and enhanced by Viebig's writings, whose audience perhaps stretched further than that of the artists' work. It has been shown here though that it was through the

¹¹⁰ *Eifelvereinsblatt*, C. Viebig, 'Der Eifelmaler Fritz von Wille', Nr 10, Bonn, 1909, 100. Sprechen diese künstlerischen Abbilder unserer lieben Heimat nicht eine laute tönende Sprache, die jeder, der Augen zu sehen hat, vernimmt tief, innen im Herzen? Ich weiß mit der Feder nichts zu sagen, das nicht Wille mit dem Pinsel ausgedrückt hätte. Wir sind durch die Eifel gewandert, beide mit denselben Augen, die Liebe zum Lande geöffnet hat; uns gab ein Gott ins Herz, die Schönheit dieser Welt zu erkennen: welche Fülle in dieser Armut, welche Pracht in dieser Bescheidenheit, welche Poesie in dieser Oede!

constant symbiosis with the *Eifelvereinsblatt* that the identity the artists had created was most obviously used to promote industry and tourism.

II Establishing the identity of Dachau as traditional using a modern style: the artists' colony *Neu Dachau*

Around 1900 three artists settled in the town of Dachau and painted from the landscape: they were Ludwig Dill, Adolf Hölzel and Arthur Langhammer.¹¹¹ The town of Dachau had been a popular destination for artists from the neighbouring Munich academy since the beginning of the nineteenth century but according to the group's founder, Hölzel, *Neu Dachau* were the first group of artists to settle there.¹¹² The term *NeuDachau* was coined by Arthur Röβler, the author of the

¹¹¹ E. Boser, *Freilicht Malerei Der Künstlerort Dachau 1870-1914*, Dachau, 2002, 23.

¹¹² A. Hölzel, 'Über künstlerische ausdrucksmitel und deren verhältnis zu nature und Bild', *Kunst für Alle*, Vol. XX, No. 6, 15.12.1904, 138.

artists' monograph.¹¹³ The town itself was first established in the 8th century. This suggests that it was not the town, which they referred to as 'new' in the name of their group, it was, instead, the artists' perception of it and how they painted it, which Rößler stressed was a 'modern' approach.¹¹⁴ Dachau is an old market town, eight miles from Munich and surrounding the town was moorland from which the Alps, Bavaria's border, can be seen. *Neu Dachau* established a successful art school in the town, which attracted a new generation of artists.¹¹⁵ The group worked together as a group of three for six years, between 1895 and 1901. Even after Langhammer's untimely death, in 1901, Hölzel and Dill continued to work together and be associated with the town through their work, as will be further outlined below.¹¹⁶ I have chosen the three artists from the *Neu Dachau* group because they settled in the town, unlike many artists who just passed through. It is assumed here that they wanted to associate themselves closely with the town, becoming involved in creating and reconstructing an identity for the town. Furthermore, I have also chosen to study this colony because, similar to Worpswede, the group was promoted by a contemporary publication the previously cited text by Rößler titled *NeuDachau*.¹¹⁷

There is very little literature that covers the *Neu Dachau* group specifically and less which focuses on issues of identity. The most comprehensive text on the group to date is Wolfgang Venzmer's *Neu-Dachau 1895-1905* (1984), which gives a biography of each of the artists in the group followed by a visual and formal

¹¹³ A. Rößler, *Neu Dachau*, Leipzig, 1905.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹¹⁵ W. Venzmer, *NeuDachau 1895-1905*, Ludwig Dill, Adolf Hölzel, Arthur Langhammer in der Künstlerkolonie Dachau, Dachau, 1984, 110.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* 9.

¹¹⁷ A. Rößler, *Neu-Dachau*, Ludwig Dill, Adolf Hölzel, Arthur Langhammer, Leipzig, 1905.

analysis of some of their works.¹¹⁸ Venzmer heavily quotes Ludwig Dill's memoirs but largely only to explain the style that the artists painted in, or their use of colour.¹¹⁹ This thesis also relies on *Dachauer Maler* (1981, author) that was also published in Dachau. As the title suggests, *Dachauer Maler* offers the reader a broader history of Dachau's art scene from 1807-1946 but as such only touches upon the artists covered in this thesis which looks at the colony from 1871-1914. The author discusses each of the artists individually and states that the three were good friends and shared an intellectual dialogue.

This study takes this concept further in asserting that the artists worked together to establish an identity for both the town and the state of Bavaria.¹²⁰ Similar to Venzmer, the authors give a biography for each artist followed by a formal analysis of their paintings.¹²¹ The leader of the group, Adolf Hölzel is credited further with a history of his successful art school. The reason behind his achievement is given as twofold: he specialised in teaching art theory and allowed women into his school.¹²² This has become a fairly typical response to the colony's history. Although both these reasons for the group's success are convincing, it does not explain what it was that made the work of *Neu Dachau* so appealing. The present work builds on their biographical introduction to the colony but adds a socio-political context of how the colony worked and what they aimed for.

¹¹⁸ W. Venzmer, *Neu-Dachau 1895-1905 Ludwig Dill, Adolf Hölzel, Arthur Langhammer in der Künstlerkolonie Dachau*, Dachau, 1984.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 56-57.

¹²⁰ O. Thiemann-Stoedtner and G. Hanke, *Dachauer Maler, Die Kunstlerschaft von 1801-1946*, Dachau, 1989, 246.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, For example Adolf Hölzel, 219.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 225-226.

The group has recently received another surge of interest from art historians and is mentioned in the catalogue *Freilichtmalerei, Der Künstlerort Dachau* (2002) which explores artist's work that featured the landscape local to Dachau. This approach offers a wider historical context to the colony, as is shown by Wilhelm Liebhart's discussion in his chapter headed *Politik, Gesellschaft und Kultur zur Prinzregentenzeit*,¹²³ in which the author discusses Bavaria's political history and culture. Although no direct parallels are drawn between Bavaria's history and the *NeuDachau* paintings, it offers an introduction into a more socio-political approach to the group's paintings. Furthermore, the author of the first chapter in *Freilicht Malerei* touches on the subject that is concentrated on here, regional identity. He attributes the success of the artists who came to the town of Dachau itself when he describes it as an 'oberbayerische Kreisstadt mit einem alten Kern, Resten einer Neben-residenz mit einer Umgebungslandschaft eigenen Charakters'¹²⁴. However, when the author directly asks the question 'Wie kam es überhaupt zur Blüte Dachaus als Künstler-Magnet um 1890?',¹²⁵ he gives the response which has become a standard line on other colonies such as Worpswede, that German artists were simply inspired by the French colony, the Barbizon School, who painted outdoors.¹²⁶ Elisabeth Boser, author of the third chapter in *Freilichtmalerei*, which shares the title of the book, argues that the landscape paintings of Dachau were harking back to pre-industrialised

¹²³ P. Beli and J. Mannes (eds.) *Freilichtmalerei, Der Künstlerort Dachau 1870-1914*, Bonn, 2002, 11.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

Germany, which was traditional and secure.¹²⁷ Apart from saying that traditional meant pre-industrialisation, 'traditional' is not explained through an analysis of identity. While Boser's explanation is plausible, the present work will build on the concept that the artists were trying to attach a sense of the traditional to the town but were part of a process of inventing what this meant. Furthermore, it will be maintained here that the landscape painting was not merely a reflection of the *pleinairism* executed in France forty years earlier.

More recently, *Rural Artists' Colonies in Europe* (2002) by Nina Lübbren, also refers to the Dachau group, arguing that regional identity was not as well articulated in painting as it was in contemporary literature since the images of Dachau were the artists' own characterisations of the village.¹²⁸ She uses Ludwig Thoma's work to describe how authors were better placed to articulate the particularities of regional identity:

Artists were responding to the realities of their rural environment but these responses were woven into a fabric of preconceived notions, habits of pictorial making, and schemata available in the painting tradition. The process of elaborating a rural place-myth in pictorial form was dialectical: place formed the artists' productions as much as they formed the image of the place.¹²⁹

This chapter builds on Lübbren's point and takes it further in an investigation into the identities that the artists expressed in landscape painting that was

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹²⁸ N. Lübbren, *Rural artists' colonies in Europe*, Manchester, 2001, 143.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 143.

subsequently expanded upon by authors. Lübbren maintains that although painting cannot detail some of the idiosyncrasies that writing can it is a better format to give an overall impression. This analysis explores the point Lübbren has raised further: this thesis claims that as a visible object the painting was to be brandished by the state as a symbol of regional identity. This present work expands on Lübbren's suggestion that regional identity was expressed in Bavaria in text but takes the stance that there was a dialectical relationship between painting and literature. By studying the regional newspapers and journals of the time and the artist's association specifically with a location, it will be shown here that the Dachau artists were driven to help form a regional identity for the town and the province of Bavaria.

The archives used here were the *Stadt Archiv*, Dachau, and the *Germanisches Nationalmuseum* in Nuremberg. The published primary sources used here include Hölzel's 1904 article in *Kunst für Alle*, which has been cited here already, Ludwig Dill's memoirs, articles in Bavaria's monthly journal *Volkskunst und Volkskunde*, Dachau's local publications of the time, *Amperbote* and *Dachauer Volksblatt*, and a book on *Tracht* titled *Sammlung Bayerischer National Costume* (1830). There are two other sets of images of *Tracht* from the end of the century which are relied upon here titled *Deutsche Volkstrachten* (1890) and another is an article in *Münchner Bilderbogen* titled 'Zur Geschichte der Kostüme Bayern (Neuzeit)' (c.1880). On the subject of nature conservation this chapter relies on a state

publication titled *Naturpflege in Bayern* (1908)¹³⁰ and a series of pamphlets titled *Moore und die Moorkultur in Bayern* (1896)¹³¹.

The section following this one is called, 'Deconstructing the identity depicted by *Neu Dachau* in Dachau and Bavaria as a whole'. It introduces the topic of identity in the *Neu Dachau* paintings and places the topic of Bavarian identity within its own socio-political framework. It will show that Bavaria itself was self-consciously differentiating itself from the rest of Germany at a state level but was also being mirrored at a grass roots level in Dachau. This claim to identity through culture was outlined by the work of *Neu Dachau* and expanded upon using the themes that the group had identified by other writers and artists. The next section features the subject of costume; it is the first of three sections to look at the work of *Neu Dachau* and is called, 'Dachau's *Tracht* myth enforcing images of the Dachau inhabitants in regional costume'. It describes how there was already an existing interest in Bavarian regional costume in the nineteenth century but the artists' paintings of Dachauer's spurred further interest in Dachau's costume from photographers and artists. It became interpreted as typically Bavarian and endorsed at state level. 'Catholic culture in Dachau as an expression of regional loyalty to Bavaria' is the section that follows that on costume and again illustrates how artists were keen to portray the otherness of Dachau through its culture. The next subheading is '*Neu Dachau's* depiction of the town's surrounding landscape'. The artists'

¹³⁰ *Naturpflege in Bayern* (1908)

¹³¹ *Moore und die Moorkultur in Bayern* (1896)

depiction of the landscape is interpreted here with the same sense of otherness as it was in their portrayal of *Tracht* and in their representation of the culture of Catholicism. The final section, '*Heimat* artist Hermann Stockmann and his preservation and celebration of Dachau', compounds and builds upon all the issues that the *Neu Dachau* had featured in their work in a jubilee that celebrated Dachau's traditional culture.

Deconstructing the identity depicted by *Neu Dachau* in Dachau and Bavaria as a whole

In the catalogue *Freilichtmalerei* Wilhelm Liebhart claims that the time when the art group were active were 'the good old times' of Bavaria which were 'weiß blau und altbayerisch'.¹³² *Neu Dachau's* art then is introduced as traditional and particularly typical of Bavaria but this work asks, why? Why did *Tracht*, religion and nature become so important to Bavarians at this time? They were expressed through literature, festivities and art in a way that showed them as a part of Bavaria's unique cultural heritage. It was a way in which to demonstrate the state's independence from the rest of Germany. Essentially it was used, (and one has to say effectively) as political influence in determining Bavaria's role within the newly created federal country or State. The leader of the group Adolf Hölzel, was consciously part of the culture of this redefining of Bavaria's distinct regional identity. In the following statement, Hölzel makes it clear that he was aware that other artists had visited Dachau but no one had settled there. He compares the

¹³² E. Boser, *Freilichtmalerei*, 11.

group to the colony of Worpswede and finally, suggests that it was the culture of Dachau that inspired his and the group's work.

Representatives of all schools worked there. Schleich, Leibl, von Uhde and Zügel are only but a few of the well-known ones that can be named. Nearly all new transformations in the German art scene since the seventies have gone through Dachau and have consolidated themselves here. Dachau's importance increased in particular during the time of plein air and the impression. It must therefore seem almost strange that in recent years a certain group of painters have preferably come to be known as "Dachau". This may provide relief as a collective name, as is the case with the painters at Worpswede, and is also justified because of what this group strives for; what points the way for them is rooted in the Dachau land and developed from this.¹³³

It is evident from this quote that the artists in *Neu Dachau* placed significant value upon their location. It will be shown that there are two types of identity at stake in the paintings of *Neu Dachau*, one belongs to Bavaria and the other is Dachau's, although they are not mutually exclusive concepts. There are ways in which the group contributed to the establishment of both. Through religion, the artists depicted a sense of Bavaria and the artists were able to refer to Dachau specifically. Through landscape the artists

¹³³ A. Hölzel, *Die Kunst für Alle*, XX, 'Über künstlerische ausdrucksmitel und deren verhältnis zu nature und bild', 15.12.1904, 138. (Vertreter aller Richtungen haben da gearbeitet. Mit Schleich, Leibl, von Uhde, Zügel müßten bei eingehender Schilderung eine Menge klingender Name genannt werden. Fast alle neuen Wandlungen in der deutschen Kunst seit den siebziger Jahren ziehen über Dachau und festigen sich hier. Insbesondere hebt die Zeit des Pleinair und der Impression Dachaus Bedeutung. Es muß darum fast merkwürdig erscheinen, daß man in der letzten Zeit vorzugsweise eine bestimmte Gruppe von Malern als Dachau nennt. Das mag wie bei den Worpswedern als Sammelname Erleichterung bieten, und auch darum gerechtfertigt sein, weil das von dieser Vereinigung Erstrebte, Richtungsgebende in Dachauer Boden wurzelt und sich daraus entwickelt hat.)

were able to characterise both Bavarian and Dachau identities. The identities that are depicted in Dachau are predominately regional and local, as discussed in the introduction. This is because the artists are keen to illustrate the character of the town of Dachau as particular but also as typical of Bavarian (regional) identity.

It will be argued here that the artists were engaged in developing a sense of identity for Dachau, at a time when Bavaria was going through a period of significant change. From Ludwig II's expression of Bavarian identity, to regional publications and to village folk festivals, the state was in a period of formation and affirmation. As will be illustrated in this section, through their differences, Bavaria and Prussia began to define themselves as their own States. Bavaria's open struggle for cultural independence can only have encouraged other states to take pride in their own culture. A friend of Wilhelm II famously wrote the following provocative statement to him illustrating the state's political and religious opposition: 'Ich kenne diese Schweinehunde gar zu gut – dieses Zentrumspack lernt man in katholischen Landen nach seinem wahren Wert schätzen! So lange der deutsche Kaiser protestantisch ist, wird er der katholischen Kirche zu mistrauen haben!'¹³⁴ Wilhelm II and Ludwig II publicly denounced each other's respective states.¹³⁵ Ludwig II's vast building programme of Catholic churches in Bavaria, his Wagnerian inspired castles and his rebuilding of Munich's cultural edifices were all part of an aggressive statement towards Prussia

¹³⁴ H. Körner, *Bayern und Preußen und Bayerns Preußen*, 1999, Berlin, 125.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 121-130.

that cemented Bavaria's distinctiveness;¹³⁶ it was therefore a culturally articulated threat to Bismarck. The danger for Prussia was Bavaria's physical proximity and shared Catholicism between Bavaria and Austria meant that if the state's voice was not heard loudly enough an alliance that was being expressed as cultural could become political. The threat was a real one since Bavaria had originally sided with Austria in the Austro-Prussian war of 1866, which would be the defining factor in Bismarck's creation of Germany.¹³⁷ Under the threat of Prussia's military might, Ludwig II signed a military agreement with Bismarck, which left him virtually powerless.¹³⁸ Ludwig II began a campaign to express his power culturally, for example, he was first to use his own image in photography for the purposes of propaganda.¹³⁹ He even invested money into developing colour photography, he gave the photos of himself to the ruling elite across Europe as well as friends and even had them sold in postcard form.¹⁴⁰ When the *Neu Dachau* group established themselves in Dachau, Bavarian patriotism was at a high ebb and, as investigation will demonstrate, their paintings were an expression of regional distinctiveness.

The main difference between the *Neu Dachau* group and the local *heimat* artists in the town is that the group attempted to depict both Bavaria's identity and Dachau's, whereas the most renowned local artist Hermann Stockmann, had focused on representing Dachau only [Fig. 1]. This image

¹³⁶ For more information on Ludwig's building programme see J. Schlim, *Ludwig II. Traum und Technik*, Munich, 2001.

¹³⁷ J. Breuilly, *Austria, Prussia and Germany 1806-1871*, London, 2002, 76.

¹³⁸ K. Sykora, *Eini Bild von einem Mann Ludwig II. Von Bayern: Konstruktion und Rezeption eines Mythos*, New York, 2004, 11.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

shows the artist with a walking group that he founded outside the *Schloß Neuburg* which was renovated in 1903 by the *Bayerische Verein für Volkskunst und Volkskunde*.¹⁴¹ Stockmann, who settled in the town after the art colony had already been founded, used the established artistic language of the colony in his work to express a caricature of the town. This was in much the same format that Heinrich Zille followed in Berlin.¹⁴² Stockmann was involved in marketing the identity that the artists had already established for the town and then developing it. He marketed it, as the Worpsweders had done, and even made a calendar as a souvenir for tourists with his characterisations of the town.¹⁴³ [Fig. 2] This image *Kalenderblatt September* shows Dachau's well known thriving market in the town square, recognisable by the town hall's tower which soars above the market. Stockmann was involved in helping to stage Dachau's 1100-year jubilee which the Prince Regent Luitpold of Bavaria attended. The Prince opened the local museum's exhibition. It was curated by Stockmann and featured the history of Dachau.¹⁴⁴ The artist's work gives an interesting counterpoint to that of *Neu Dachau*. He worked in the town yet exhibited both in the *Jahresausstellung der Münchener Künstlergenossenschaft* and the *Sezession*.¹⁴⁵ Stockmann's work helps to define the differences between folk art and the work of *Neu Dachau*. It will be argued that even before the war, Stockmann had already begun to market Dachau using the template of

¹⁴¹ 'Hermann Stockmann und der Bayerische Verein für Volkskunst und Volkskunde', *Dachauer Museumsschriften*, Dachau, 1914, 17.

¹⁴² H. Pfaffenberger, *Identität, Eigenständigkeit, Handlungskompetenz der Sozialarbeit*, London, 2001, 31.

¹⁴³ O. Thiemann-Stoedtner and G. Hanke, *Dachauer Maler*, 145.

¹⁴⁴ H. Puknus (ed.) *Dachauer Museumsschriften*, U. Katherina, 'Hermann Stockmann und der Bayerische Verein für Volkskunst und Volkskunde', Vol. 7, Dachau, 1987,

¹⁴⁵ Venzmer, *Neu-Dachau, Ludwig Dill, Adolf Hölzel and Arthur Langhammer in der Künstlerkolonie Dachau*, Dachau, 1984, 15.

identity created by the *Neu Dachau* group. The artists' work covered in this thesis was seen on a national stage and had more cosmopolitan influences because the artists had travelled widely. This allowed the regional identity that they depicted to translate more easily into an eclectic expression of national identity.¹⁴⁶ As has been seen in the Eifel chapter, the Dachau artists shared similarities with *heimat* artists. This will also be explored in the following Worpswede chapter.

Dachau's *Tracht* myth enforcing images of the Dachau inhabitants in regional costume

Tracht played an important role in the *Neu Dachau* paintings. It is clear is that the artists were not concerned whether or not they gave an accurate depiction of the inhabitants in their costume. The interest in regional costume developed in the nineteenth century and was reflected in the work of *Neu Dachau*. This will not be viewed here solely as an independent phenomenon but as part of a wider trend in Bavaria, which arose from both the top and bottom ends of society. Bavaria's monarchy had an interest in enhancing the state's identity as a display of strength and unity after unification. Regina Bendix argues that folk costume was a natural regional development strongly endorsed by the Bavarian monarchy.¹⁴⁷ By the nineteenth century such dress had ceased to be an indicator of social status but was an affirmation of regional allegiance and identity. For example, Maximilian II of Bavaria illustrated this point when in 1842 he had his own

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 15-20.

¹⁴⁷ *The Journal of American Folklore*, R. Bendix, 'Moral Integrity in Costumed Identity: Negotiating "National Costume" in 19th century Bavaria', Vol. 111, No. 440, (Spring, 1998)133.145.

wedding party and his staff wore folk costume. Bendix observes that the message that Maximilian II conveyed with this act of regional affiliation was that Bavaria would not falter under the pressure of the French revolutions. By this act, the King endeavoured to increase Bavarian sentiment against French opposition. Given that no uniformly Bavarian folk dress existed, coupled with the indication that the tradition was dwindling, a Magistrate had to reside over the preparations for the wedding in order to confirm what the appropriate 'traditional dress' ought to be.¹⁴⁸ Bendix concludes that,

Maximilian's wedding was to have a signal function for the Bavarian kingdom. Codes of moral integrity, costumed in regionally identifiable dress, were supposed to solidify the message of a strong, rich and old nation. The examined bureaucratic reports, however, illustrate rather how 'the pressure of a gigantic representational event led to the emergence of a culture of display, created from real and fictional habits of clothing.' Active participants often consented to wear garments they would never have worn for a wedding at home, bowing to the desire for a rurally focused and antiquated image of costume.¹⁴⁹

It will be shown here that what was deemed to be *Tracht* had no fixed expression, since it changed as contemporary fashion did. The wedding had a huge impact in Bavaria: inducing the intended blend of royalist loyalty and national feeling. After the abdication of his father, Maximilian II continued

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 142.

his cultural programme encouraging the Bavarian population to wear traditional costume at various public events and endorsed a syllabus for children to learn about regional dress. The lasting effects of Maximilian's efforts are acknowledged by Bendix: 'while the kingdom of Bavaria could not withstand the pressure of Prussia and was annexed in 1866, national sentiment had been so thoroughly institutionalized that it continued even after the demise of Bavaria's [...] king, Ludwig II, in 1878.'¹⁵⁰ This reasoning, that Bavarian national sentiment was only a political manoeuvre, can be seen as one dimensional: Sykora began her argument claiming that a pride in regional German culture including *Tracht* developed both naturally from below and with an endorsement from the top. Here she seems to say that it was Ludwig's legacy that generated regional patriotism. This chapter maintains regional patriotism was expressed more virulently after 1871 as a visual act of defiance against Prussian normalisation. As will be seen here in the paintings by the *Neu Dachau* artists the sitters were not painted participating a wedding or an event, which would have warranted the costume. The important issue was to give an impression of the costume itself and not the context in which it was worn.

The successor of Ludwig II came to Dachau to celebrate a weekend of festivities which included a parade of inhabitants in regional costume. Even before German unification there was a vested interest in Bavarian costume. The book, *Sammlung Bayerische National-Costume* published in 1830 is

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 142.

testament to this.¹⁵¹ It is similar to texts of the late nineteenth century but features an introduction as well as a description of the clothes from the villages in Bavaria. The author states that the book was intended to both inspire artists and theatre costume designers.¹⁵² One curious difference between the statement in this book and the sentiment of those in the late nineteenth century is the author's observation that, over time, regional costume changed and developed.¹⁵³ He explains that the changes were due to new modes in fashion:

As, in Bavaria, only the middle classes had a national dress, which is to some extent still the case, but the rural population preserved the clothing that has been usual in the different historical districts since ancient times, and those people, mainly in the border regions and the mountain regions were happy to wear the costumes, or at least some pieces of clothing of neighbouring peoples; it would be only proper, because it is me who decides on the city costume on the first page of each booklet, even if it cannot be recognised (which the success will demonstrate even more clearly), that even the national dress of the middle classes has been subject to several changes and - after the French costumes and the fashions that are predominant from time to time and announced by journals everywhere - is modelled, designed and modified as far as colours, tailoring, decoration etc. are concerned.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ F. J. Lipowski, *Sammlung Bayerischer National Costume*, Munich, 1830.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 4. (Da in Baiern [sic] eigentlich nur dem Bürgerstande eine Nazional=Kleidung gewesen und zum teil noch ist, das Landvolk aber nach der in der verschiedenen Gauen schon in alter Vorzeit üblicher Bekleidung sich erhalten, auch vorzüglich an den Grenzen, und in Gebirges = Gegenden mit den Costümen benachbarter Völker, wenigst in einigen Kleidungs- = Stücken, sich begabet hat; so dürfte es an der Ordnung senn [sic.], da ich das erste Blatt eines jeden Heftes den städtischen Costüm

Sykora claimed that Ludwig II had used 'traditional' Bavarian costume as a political tool, but the evidence brought forward from the above quote shows that *Tracht* was not like an un-changing uniform but developed with the times. Ludwig II, like the artists in Dachau suggest that the costume was traditional in order to stake a claim in what he suggested was an authentic heritage. The authors of costume books then became keen to identify exactly what a traditional *Tracht* was. The Dachauers may always have worn a distinctive set of regional costume but in all probability their clothes changed material, colour and design. The *Neu Dachau* group suggest in their paintings that this was part of the inhabitant's identity by depicting them in their most elaborate outfits. It is to be expected that sitters would dress up when invited to sit for an artist or photographer. However, the depiction of regional dress conveyed in this context to contemporaries is more than an image of country folk in their finery.

The depiction of townsfolk in their regional costume was most significant in the work of Arthur Langhammer who painted *Junge Dachauerin mit der Großmutter von der Kommunion heimkehrend* of 1899 [Fig. 3]. The scene is set outdoors by a river. There are three figures in the painting all of whom appear to be alone in their thoughts not interacting with each other. The grandmother wears her full *Tracht* and with one foot in front of the other she has just entered the scene. As the grandmother gazes past her granddaughter, who has just returned from communion, there is a passing

bestimme, wenn gleich nicht zuerkennen ist (was der Verfolg noch anschaulicher darstellen wird), daß auch die bürgerliche National-Kleidung so manche Veränderung erlitten, und nach der französischen Kleidertracht und der von Zeit zu Zeit herrschenden Mode, welche Journale überall verkünden, an Farben, Zuschnitt, Verzierung u. dgl. Mehr, oder weniger sich modelt, gestaltet, und bequemt.)

of tradition from the older generation to the next through the culture of religion and costume. *Tracht* is used as a symbol here for the continuing of tradition through the generations. Like Maximilian II fifty years before, the artist used regional costume to portray tradition in Bavaria.

Images of the Dachauers in traditional folk costume in books and journals [Figs. 4 and 5] of 1880 and 1890, respectively, pre-date the artist's settlement in the town. The *Neu Dachau* artists did not create an interest in Dachau's folk costume. They were drawn to it from a pre-existing tradition. They were involved in a process of reinforcing and expanding upon the celebration of Dachau's regional costume. Figure 4, from a contemporary source of a Munich picture book, shows four prints of Germans in their folk costume from different regions in Bavaria.¹⁵⁵ The image of the Dachauer sat in her full *Tracht*, receiving a drink in a tankard, is certainly the most flamboyant of the four images. The figures from Rosenheim and Miesbach seem to be dressed in a more generic form of *Tracht* in comparison to the Dachauer woman's dress. In order to define what was most particular about the Dachauers the illustrator chose the most dramatic costume to depict the sitter. This set of four images highlights another point. The Dachau illustration is the most dramatic compared to the more generic images of the inhabitants from Rosenheim and Miesbach. These comparisons with other Bavarian towns show that Dachau's perceived distinctiveness had already been touched upon in Bavarian journals. The painting is taken from

¹⁵⁵ Braun and Schneider, *Münchner Bilderbogen*, 'Zur geschichte der Kostüme Bayern (Neuzeit)', c.1880, 466.

the 1890 survey of *Tracht* [Fig.5], shows the women wearing a similar *Tracht* to the previous example.¹⁵⁶ This image is part of a series from regions all over Germany - this particular image of Dachau's inhabitants was chosen as the only example from Bavaria. From this author's perspective, Dachau's regional costume was typically Bavarian. The depiction of the unusual character of the inhabitants' dress drew attention to other artists and writers who were eager to classify Dachauers' dress as typically Bavarian. If local costume was typically Bavarian then, in this sense the local translates into regional. The *Neu Dachau* group expanded upon this by painting locals in their own towns and also carrying out various Bavarian religious acts, thus offering a broader description of regional identity.

The success of the *Neu Dachau's* work encouraged a culture of artists coming to Dachau to paint the locals in their costume, no doubt supported by Hölzel's own art school. The depiction of Dachauers in their *Tracht* became such a popular endeavour by artists at the Munich academy that one photographer, Eduard W. Hiebel, set up a business in the town, taking highly staged photographs of the locals in their full costume and sold them to art students [Fig. 6].¹⁵⁷ As seen by this set of four images from the postcards the images are taken in the photographer's studio with all the sitters in full costume. Hermann Stockmann, who wrote a tourists' guide, observed that the colourful dress of the local inhabitants was in itself a source of inspiration to artists:

¹⁵⁶ A. Kretschmer, *Deutsche Volkstrachten*, Leipzig, 1890.

¹⁵⁷ Wittmann, *Dachau um 1900*, 157

How charmingly original is the gradually disappearing old traditional dress of the women of Dachau. This bodice decorated with a thousand folds that grudgingly cloak every form, then the bat-like lace bonnet, the brightly coloured stockings and aprons – absolutely picturesque!¹⁵⁸

Stockmann elucidates the fascination with local's costumes in the above, a culture of which had begun with *Neu Dachau* paintings of the inhabitants in their *Tracht*. The artists used the locals' costume as a way of celebrating what they described as their unique identity. Furthermore, in their titles of images of the Dachauers in *Tracht* they also used the town's name in the titles of their works in order to further fix place. This can be seen by the reproductions Rößler used in *Neu Dachau* and the text below by Hölzel which further emphasised their connection with the town. For example, Langhammer used the name of the town in *Junge Dachauerin mit der Großmutter* [Fig. 3] again in his *Dachauerin unter Kastanienblüten* (1900), the same affirmation of place was used by Adolf Hölzel in *Alte Dachauerin* of c. 1900 [Fig. 7]. If the observer were unsure of where the *Tracht* was from it was confirmed in the title.

It is claimed that Hölzel's work was too French and neo-Impressionistic - this led him to leave Munich and establish the art school in Dachau.¹⁵⁹ All of the members of the group however, painted in a style which was sympathetic to French Impressionism. Langhammer's painting of the

¹⁵⁸ H. Teufelhart, *Ansichten-Album und Fremden=Führer von Dachau und Umgebung*, Dachau, 1905, 7. (Wie reizend originell ist die allmählich verschwindende alte Tracht der Dachauerinnen. Diese tausendfältigen verzierten Mieder, die neidisch jede Form verhüllen, dann die fledermausähnlichen Spitzenhauben, die buntfarbigen Strümpfe und Schürzen – ungemein malerisch!)

¹⁵⁹ Rößler, *Neu Dachau*, 100.

Dachau child and grandmother is certainly painted with impasto. The work is finished but the artist has left large parts of the depicted floor with bare canvas. It seems a contradiction to depict what was seen as a time-honoured way of life in a modern style, especially when the artists in the Eifel and Worpswede continued to paint in more of a traditional style. Venzmer wrote that the artists' modern approach can be attributed to their connection with French modes of painting through their training in and proximity to Munich.¹⁶⁰ In subject matter, and more significantly in style, the *Neu Dachau* paintings were a far cry from the large naturalistic history painting of the Prussian school of thought, led by Anton von Werner.¹⁶¹ Illustrating his disapproval of Impressionist painting, Wilhelm II is quoted in Peter Paret as having said 'Is it really right that a painting should become worthwhile at ten paces?'¹⁶² Further geographically and culturally from Prussia than the artists in Berlin, the Dachauers had the artistic freedom to paint in a style which did not toe the official Prussian line. The theme of religion as represented by *Neu Dachau* illustrates how the artists chose to represent an openly political part of Bavarian culture in order to further highlight its particularity.

Catholic culture in Dachau as an expression of regional loyalty to Bavaria

The cultural struggle (*Kulturkampf*) came to define the widely divergent customs inherent in Bavaria's claim to power against the established order of the Prussians. Through an examination of the artists' paintings it will be

¹⁶⁰ Venzmer, *Neu Dachau 1895-1905*, 15.

¹⁶¹ P. Paret, 'The Journal of Modern History', *The Tschundi Affair*, (Dec.) 1981.

¹⁶² *Ibid.* 591 cited from Wilhelm II's speech from December 1901 quoted in *The Berlin Secession*, 26-27.

shown that the artists were interested in representing the Catholic culture of Bavaria rather than a sense of spiritual devotion to God. In this way they were better able to propagate a sense of Bavarian identity. They represented culture as a resistance to Prussia's political power. Bavaria was distinct from all other states, with the exception of the Rhineland, because it resisted Luther's Reformation and remained strongly Catholic throughout Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*.

The *Kulturkampf* was essentially born out of Austria's defeat against Prussia, making Germany a unified and Protestant dominated country. Bismarck's aim was to unite Germany under one denomination, he perceived this would be more easily manageable, but ultimately he failed.¹⁶³ By the end of the *Kulturkampf*, in the late 1870s, 1800 priests had been imprisoned or exiled and 16 million Marks of property were seized; yet its people still remained Catholic.¹⁶⁴ German historian David Blackbourn argues that the 'Kulturkampf left a powerful legacy among German Catholics, a sense of being branded as pariahs that reinforced the existence of a separate Catholic subculture.'¹⁶⁵ Christopher Clark goes as far to say that within the Prussian Empire there was a sense that the Catholics threatened the whole of unified Germany.¹⁶⁶ The *Neu Dachau's* images of the Catholics' culture are not mere rural scenes populated by the locals; they are politically charged images. They conveyed the cultural struggle between Prussia and Bavaria; the premise of which was seen to be a threat

¹⁶³ W. Volkert, *Geschichte Bayerns*, Munich, 2004, 68.

¹⁶⁴ D. Blackbourn, *History of Germany 1780-1918*, Oxford, 1997, 197.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹⁶⁶ C. Clark, *The Iron Kingdom*, 574.

to the newly formed German nation. The *Neu Dachau* group's success can partly be explained by the fact that they had tapped into a contemporary surge of interest in Bavarian culture, which was expressed not only through folk costume but also through the representation of Catholic culture.

The representation of Catholic culture in the artists' paintings was the *Neu Dachau's* way of representing the 'otherness' of Bavaria. This was indicated through both dress and ceremony in the artists' depictions of the Dachauers. Langhammer painted a series of children at their first communion, always in the Dachau countryside. Rößler recorded that Langhammer painted the communion children dressed in their first communion robes from life. He believed that this would give his work a greater sense of authenticity.¹⁶⁷ *Kommunikantinnen bei der Dachauer Fronleichnamspzession* of c. 1900 [Fig. 8] is a Catholic procession (known as Corpus Christi in English), which is in honour of the Eucharist. After Mass there is a customary procession which is depicted by Langhammer here. As in his painting of a grandmother with her granddaughter after her communion Langhammer has represented an older generation in the background signifying a continuation of the traditional culture. The green coloured light from the trees is rendered as reflecting from the children's robes. The children are in a harmonious synthesis with their environment. Langhammer's setting is significant. He does not depict a Church in this image or in his other works, even in the background. His choice to depict processions invokes the gaze and the suggestion of the involvement of the

¹⁶⁷ A. Rößler, *Neu Dachau*, Leipzig, 1905, 153.

community; that the children watched and were seen by others to be watching. In this way the artist heightens a sense of Bavarian culture rather than the inhabitant's spiritual relationship with God. Langhammer's set of communion paintings were bought for the Bavarian State collection. They were exhibited at Schleißheim castle which was open to the public.¹⁶⁸ The fact that this series came under public ownership in Bavaria is significant because at state level they were seen to reflect Bavarian identity.

Hölzel's depiction of a nunnery during a bible reading session is also set outdoors, titled *Im Klostergarten* of c. 1906 [Fig. 9]. As with the previous Langhammer painting, a nun and the child closest to the viewer stare out of the painting as though disturbed in a moment by an onlooker. John Berger explains that in the history of art, the gaze is almost always male and the female is always aware of being looked at.¹⁶⁹ In that sense it follows that the surveyor of the nun and child is a male gaze, making them aware of their own virginity.¹⁷⁰ Clark shows that the sexual propriety of Catholics was impugned with a sense of mocking during the cultural struggle.¹⁷¹ The image presents an issue which drove right to the heart of the differences between the culture of the north and south; because it highlights the Catholic sense of moral propriety as seen from the perspective of the other.

¹⁶⁸ Rößler, *Neu Dachau*, 155.

¹⁶⁹ J. Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, London, 1972, 46

¹⁷⁰ J. Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 46.

¹⁷¹ Clark, *The Iron Kingdom*, 570.

Hölzel also painted a number of works depicting Catholic processions.¹⁷² In *Gang zur Prozession* of 1901 [Fig. 10] the artist shows three figures, all of whom are in white robes. The two young girls carry white candles. The scene then is most likely to be the children's first communion. Again, the focus is on the procession, rather than a destination, highlighting the suggestion that the artist was interested in the culture of Catholicism as a marker of regional identity rather than the act of devotion to God. For these artists, Catholicism, like the inhabitants' *Tracht* or the view of the Alps over the moors, was a characteristic, which typified Dachau's identity. The desire to preserve and protect Bavaria's culture of Catholicism was reflected in an article by contemporary columnist Hans Schnetzer who claimed that outdoor crucifixes, together with graves dotted around Bavaria's countryside were typical of the Bavarian State and therefore needed protecting.¹⁷³ Similarly, Stetzer argues that the fact the graves can be found in the woods as if one happens upon them, as if on a pilgrimage, heightens the sense of religious experience.¹⁷⁴ The *Neu Dachau* themes of expounding Bavaria's Catholicism as particular to that state as well as viewing God and nature as part of a synthesis was therefore part of a contemporary conscientious strategy which began at state level and filtered down into Bavarian culture.

Neu Dachau's depiction of the town's surrounding landscape

The moors and the Alps characterised Bavaria's landscape. Dachau's history of nature conservation is considered here so it can be seen that Bavarian landscapes were more than just 'quaint' images. They were part of a wider

¹⁷² For other examples see Hölzel's *Der Zeiten Wiederkehr*, 1903 and *Kirchgang*, 1903, both can be found in Rößler's *Neu Dachau*, 114 and 115.

¹⁷³ H. Schnetzer, *Volkskunst und Volkskunde*, 'Die Friedhöfe im baerischen Inntal', Nr. 8, 1909, 124

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 125

socio-political framework. Bavaria's nature protection scheme was well established by the turn of the century, it was a contested subject as Catholicism was, as will be outlined in the following. In 1908 the Bavarian regional government published a small book that gave a short history of nature conservation in the state and discussed issues about how to best protect the countryside in the future.¹⁷⁵ The book is beautifully illustrated with photographs of Bavaria's wide variety of natural wonders such as its moors, forests and mountains. Eigner observed that species such as the beaver were already dying out.¹⁷⁶ More specifically to the region the artists were working in, he observed that the Alpine moors sustained wide varieties of vegetation many of which were not yet accounted for, yet were already under grave threat.¹⁷⁷ On the German oak the author wrote

Other dignified living forms in nature also suffered the same fate as this and many other German trees. The witnesses of past times, of bygone centuries and millennia are disappearing more and more; our Fatherland is losing such irreplaceable treasures on a daily basis.¹⁷⁸

The author laments the loss of the German oak in the Bavarian countryside as though the destruction of the trees threatened the very loss of German identity.¹⁷⁹ Bavarian landscape painting then was at the centre of the debate of regional loyalty and nature conservation.

¹⁷⁵ G. Eigner, *Naturpflege in Bayern*, München, 1908. So wie es diesen und noch vielen deutschen Bäumen ergangen ist, ergeht es auch anderen erwürdigen Naturgebilden. Mehr und mehr verschwinden die Zeugen vergangener Zeiten, verflossener Jahrhunderte und Jahrtausende; tagtäglich wird unser Vaterland ärmer an solchen unersetzbaren Schätzen.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 44-46.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 14 and 34.

Hölzel explained that it was essentially the particular landscape that had attracted so many artists to Dachau. He stated that it was the moors and the lakes that attracted the artists from Munich.

With its extremely picturesque surroundings, its moor land, its many standing and flowing waters, Dachau had long been a well-known place for studies. The most fruitful artists spent time here, either briefly or for longer periods. Representatives from all schools worked there. Schleich, Leibl, von Uhde and Zügel are only but a few of the well-known ones that can be named. Nearly all new transformations in the German art scene since the seventies have gone through Dachau and plein air and the impression reinforced Dachau's importance. It must therefore seem almost strange that in recent years a certain group of painters have preferably come to be known as the "Dachauers".¹⁸⁰

For Dill and Hölzel, the representation of Dachau's water-logged moors was an essential theme in their work, examples of which can be seen in Hölzel's *Vorfrühling bei Dachau*, *Frühlingslandschaft*, *Paar am Wasser I* and *Frau an der Amper*. For the depiction *Vorfrühling bei Dachau* of 1904 [Fig. 11]

Hölzel used the colour blue throughout the painting in order to capture the impression of water in the entire picture. The small body of water in the foreground was therefore reflected in the trees and the sky.

¹⁸⁰A. Hölzel, 'Über Künstlerische Ausdrucksmittel', *Kunst für Alle*, Vol. 20, No. 6, 15th Dec. 2006, 137. (Dachau war mit seiner malerisch so reichhaltigen Umgebung, seinem Moos, den vielen stehenden und fließenden Gewässern, schon lange ein wohlbekannter Studienplatz. Die nahrhaftesten Künstler waren vorübergehend oder für längere Zeit hier. Vertreter aller Richtungen haben da gearbeitet. Mit Schleich, Leibl, von Uhde, Zügel müßten bei eingehender Schilderung eine Menge klingender Namen genannt werden. Fast alle neuen Wandlungen in der deutschen Kunst seit den siebziger Jahren über Dachau und festigen Plenair und der Impression Dachaus Bedeutung. Es muß darum fast merkwürdig erscheinen, daß man in der letzten Zeit vorzugsweise eine bestimmte Gruppe von Malern als Dachauer nennt.)

Dill wrote in his memoirs that he had to wear glasses to protect him from the light that reflected from the moors:

These boots and the dark eyeglasses with which we tamed the bright sunshine were generally held against us [...] those fire buckets! [...] We painted outside, mostly using tempera paints, on canvas or on cardboard. The painting surface has to be kept constantly wet and, for this purpose, our painting assistants often had to carry the water in buckets from some distance away. This continuous keeping the painting and the surface wet is extremely tiresome, and yet tempera offers a great number of advantages over oil!¹⁸¹

Dill suggests here that keeping the image constantly moist created the impression of wetness in his paintings. The water in the moor landscape was represented by Dill in various pictures, such as *Verblühte Disteln*, *Winter am Sumpfloch im Dachauer Moos* and *Grauer Frühsommertag an der Amper*. The painting *Verblühte Disteln* of 1898 [Fig. 12] best characterises Dill's work because it represents the moors interspersed with birches. This was a common theme in his Dachau landscapes since birch trees grow well in the damp of the wetlands. The painting is fairly abstract as Dill has reduced his painting to the essential properties which are: the thistles, the trees and the water. The painting is harmonious as everything is bathed in

¹⁸¹ L. Dill, *Memoirs*, Germanisches Historisches Archiv, Nuremberg, 102.

(Diese Siefel und die dunklen Augengläser, mit denen wir das grelle Sonnenlicht dämpften, wurden uns allgemein übelgenommen [...] die Feuer-Eimer! [...] Wir malten nämlich draußen meist mit Temperafarbe, auf Leinwand oder Karton. Dazu muss der Malgrund immer nass gehalten werden, und dazu müssen die Malbuben das Wasser in Eimern oft von weitem herschleppen. Das fortwährende Nasshalten des Bildes und des Grundes ist äußerst lasting, dafür bietet die Tempera Größe Vorzüge vor dem Öl!!)

the pink light of evening, while the water appears to glide through the areas of vegetation. Author of the *Neu Dachau* monograph, Arthur Röβler suggested that it was through Dill's rendition of moisture in the air which gave his work such atmosphere.

The rumour was that he paints his pictures wearing dark glasses, because so much atmosphere could be seen and felt in his paintings [...] and so he achieves the structure of corporeal air; - he paints the swarming, lively air. And he likes painting the air so much because it is through the air that we humans are physically most intimately connected to nature, to the world and to life itself; we human beings release ourselves from life when we cease to breathe.'¹⁸²

After a long discussion of Dill's landscapes Röβler concludes that, he is now 'became a whole German, something that means a lot in our times.'¹⁸³ Röβler signifies that national identity in art carried weight during his time. It is worth noting the author's use of the word *Deutscher* rather than *Bayerisch*; Bavarian identity as a counterpoint to Prussian was only that. It apparently was not anti- German. Even though Dill did not paint clear signifiers such as regional costume or Catholic ceremonies his landscapes were considered by Röβler to have a strong German quality.

In the following section from his memoirs Dill wrote that he had a sense of longing (*Sehnsucht*) for the countryside in Dachau. The longing to be in one's *heimat* was a sense strongly articulated by *heimat* artists and the

¹⁸² A. Röβler, *Neu Dachau*, Leipzig, 1905, 49-50. Es ist gewispert worden, er male mit einer schwarzen Brille vor der Augen, weil in seinen Gemälden immer so sehr viel Atmosphäre zu sehen und zu spüren ist [...] so gewinnt er die Wirkung der Struktur der körperlichen Luft; - er malt die wimmelnde, lebendige Luft. Und er malt die Luft so gern, weil durch sie der Mensch leiblich auf das innigste mit der Natur, der Welt, dem Leben verbunden ist; der Mensch löbt sich vom Leben, wenn er nicht mehr atmet.'

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 52.

associated movements, which has already been discussed in the introduction to this thesis.

Every single one of us is familiar with that quite unsentimental longing for a place where you are sure you would feel good, a place you always want to be, because it is a place you could live in, a place you could die in; [...] This feeling of longing is sometimes so strong, that we can almost feel it as a tangible reality. [...] I drove out one beautiful autumn day to visit my dear friend Hölzel who lived in Dachau, a place that was as yet unknown to me. To my great astonishment, I saw a pond on both sides exuding splendiferous colour harmonies. Hölzel showed me a number of his favourite motifs, although none of them had anything special to offer me. Then I said to him “and now I want to guide you around”. And even he stood there amazed at my exquisite discoveries! From then on we ventured further and further into the moorland, where our enthusiasm knew no bounds. The white moorland was fantastic. And that was when I made my decision!! Dachau and only Dachau!!¹⁸⁴

The artist is keen to stress that he had an emotional connection with the landscape and he explains that it was this feeling for the moors which continued to motivate him to paint. Furthermore, the artist claims that he

¹⁸⁴ L. Dill, *Memoirs*, Germanisches Historisches Archiv, Nuremberg, 103 (Jeder von uns kennt das durchaus unsentimentale Empfinden der Sehnsucht nach einem Orte, von dem man das Gefühl hat, dass einem dort wohl wäre, wo man immer sein möchte, weil man dort leben, dort sterben könnte; [...] So stark ist das Gefühl dieser Sehnsucht zuweilen, dass es Wirklichkeitsvorstellungen in uns weckt. [...] Um meinen lieben Freund Hölzel in dem mir noch unbekanntem Dachau zu besuchen, fuhr ich an einem schönen Herbsttage da hinaus. Zu meinem großen Erstaunen sah ich zu beiden Seiten einen Tümpel mit prachtvollen Farbklingen. Hölzel zeigte mir eine Anzahl beliebter Motive, die mir aber nichts besonderes bieten konnten. Da sagte ich zu ihm: 'nun will ich aber Dich einmal führen'. Auch er stand staunend vor meinen köstlichen Entdeckungen! Von da an drangen wir immer weiter vor ins Moos, wo unsere Begeisterung keine Grenzen hatte. Das weiße Moor hat es und ganz besonders angetan. Da war mein Entschluss gefasst!! Dachau und nur Dachau!!)

had discovered the moors. His expressed longing to be in the moors, his emotional connection to it and his claim of discovery illustrate a desire to claim ownership over the landscape. For Dill then, his paintings were of a landscape that included his own identity as a southern German.

Even Langhammer, whose main body of work from his Dachau series shows peopled landscapes, chose to paint a pure landscape in his depiction of a body of water in Dachau, *Am Bache* of c. 1895 [Fig. 13]. Like Dill, Langhammer reduced his palette and his forms to create this depiction of a brook flanked by impressionistic bushes with the Alps in the background. Water was an essential theme in the Dachauer's landscapes in order to identify wetlands that the region was known for. The group chose to represent these bodies of water because they saw them as inducing a romantic flair to their work.

Hölzel's painting *Komposition in Rot I* of 1905 [Fig. 14] is a reduced image of many of the themes discussed above. By now the artist's work had become fairly abstract. He shows the Alps in the background, with some of the old market town in front of it and the female figures in the foreground wear a reduced version of *Tracht*. A view of the Alps was Bavaria's border with Austria. It carried the weighty connotation of Bavaria's past with the country, their allegiance during the Austro-Prussian war and their shared Catholicism. Bavaria was geographically and culturally closer to Austria

than Prussia.¹⁸⁵ All of the figures have their heads bowed and some have their hands clasped in prayer. One female figure kneels in front of the figure in the foreground. Clearly the conclusion here is that there is something of Catholic significance taking place. The artist used themes that, for him, epitomised Dachau's character with the view of the Alps, its Catholicism and regional costume. In the painting's abstraction, the artist has reduced the work to what he saw as its essential elements. His reduction indicates an intention to symbolise Dachau as a metaphor for Bavarian identity.

Heimat artist Hermann Stockmann and his preservation and celebration of Dachau

It has been shown here that the *Neu Dachau* group were part of a movement which engaged in promoting a sense of Bavarian identity by representing Dachau as a typical Bavarian town, through the depictions of *Tracht*, Catholic ritual and nature. Hermann Stockmann's work could only benefit from the high profile group who exhibited in Munich and had a monograph written on them by a well known art critic. Their work directly helped to trigger a celebration of folk culture in the town, which propagated a more aggressive sense of Dachau identity with the same underlying premise: Dachau was everything that a traditional Bavarian town should be. This culminated in 1908 in the town's 1100-jubilee celebrated by locals and the representatives from the highest office of state. It was a three day festival consisting of daily concerts, a procession of Dachauers in their regional

¹⁸⁵ S. Barbour and C. Carmichael, *Language and nationalism in Europe*, Oxford, 2000, 163

costume and the opening of an exhibition of the history of Dachau by Luitpold of Bavaria.¹⁸⁶ The Jubilee was planned over a period of four years and was well publicised in and outside of Dachau. A commemorative publication advertised the exhibition at the Dachau castle beneath the announcement of the main event [Fig. 15]. The castle had previously been closed to the public but in honour of the jubilee it became an exhibition space for the artists in Dachau. This is a good example of how the jubilee helped to create a collective identity for the town. The artists helped establish the castle as a symbol of the town's identity. It had lain in ruins until the 1860s when Stockmann appealed for it to be opened to the public as a centre of artistic production for the town. The guidebook that celebrated the jubilee cited the castle as evidence of Dachau's *Urpast*.¹⁸⁷ Stockmann was involved in a dialectical process with the *Neu Dachau* artists and local authors of inventing the town's identity as old and established.

There are two tourist guides held at the *Dachau StadtArchiv* which celebrate the event. The first was a tourist guide that documented Dachau's history. The guide idealises the town as a natural haven from the roar of the industry and yet simultaneously advertises the fact that there are regular trains to the town from Munich.¹⁸⁸ The author of the guide also highlights

¹⁸⁶ F. Turnwall, *Ansichten Album Fremden-Führer von Dachau und Umgebung*, Dachau, 1905, 9.

¹⁸⁷ Turnwall, *Ansichten Album Fremden-Führer*, Dachau, 1905, 10

¹⁸⁸ H. Teufelhart, *Ansichten Album*, 5.

the fact that so many artists came to the town as a verification of Dachau's natural wonders.¹⁸⁹

The other was a commemorative publication. One postcard printed for the event shows a woman in Bavarian dress standing in front of a screen that shows the local landscape. To the left of the woman are the waterlogged moors which lead to a depiction of the Alps. The postcard is a perfect example of the desire to preserve both Dachau's culture and its natural landscape.¹⁹⁰ Other postcards and paraphernalia show depictions of the town's inhabitants in traditional dress. Even though the *Neu Dachau* group were not directly involved in promoting the town to tourists, tourist guides used the artists' landscapes as a way of substantiating the town's attractive qualities and can have only benefitted the sales of the artists' work.

As one photograph shows, the local populace dressed in a variety of Bavarian costume while Prince Luitpold and his party remained suited. [Fig. 16] This photograph was taken on the steps of the museum that was to be opened by Prince Luitpold himself. The Jubilee, combined with the opening of the museum and the costumes of those who participated, is a prime example of the endorsement of regional identity by representatives of the Bavarian state. Werner Blessing observes that the effect of such media is difficult to overstate:

The numerous decorations and medals dispensed on such a day fulfilled the same function, as did the pictures and booklets which,

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 124.

thanks to photography and efficient printing techniques, made their way in floods via the schools and associations into the home. A decisive part in the preparation, dissemination and effect of the ritual was of course played by the press, whose sales towards the end of the nineteenth century, with illiteracy largely a thing of the past, were expanding rapidly, especially among the lower orders.¹⁹¹

Given the background of the Prussian and Bavarian tensions it is likely that such paraphernalia would have served to openly heighten Bavaria's sense of self and therefore functioned to increase its power within united Germany.

As a founding member of the Bavarian association *Volkskunst und Volkskunde* Stockmann had established a *Heimat* museum in the town and was responsible for the preservation of old buildings in the area.¹⁹² In an article for *Volkskunst und Volkskunde*, Stockmann drew attention to the unique character of the town and its precious moor landscape; he suggested that the town naturally lent itself to tourists.

Very close to the city of Munich, there is an area that is very much loved, valued and visited by artists - the area around Dachau. How unforgettable is a walk on Dachau's mountain range, or a stroll up and down the banks of the River Amper. This town, the crowning glory of the local hills, offers a diversity of landscapes in its surroundings that can certainly be found nowhere else nearby

¹⁹¹ *Journal of Contemporary History*, Blessing, 'The Cult of Monarchy, Political Loyalty and the Workers' Movement in Imperial Germany', Vol. 13, No. 2, (April, 1978) 361.

¹⁹² H. Puknus (ed.), *Dachauer Museumsschriften*, U. Nauderer, 'Hermann Stockmann das Heimatpflegerische Wirken des Künstlers', Nr. 7, Dachau, 1987, 20.

Munich. In the northern hills with their fertile clay soil, the rich wealth of crops, in between these the small villages with their Gothic, spire-bearing churches; in the south the moorland with its black earth and that lush vegetation that fascinates artists, nature lovers and botanists alike.¹⁹³

In the above statement, Stockmann groups together the artist, conservationist and botanist who all behold Dachau's countryside with the same spiritual reverence. The grouping together of these three professions alludes to Stockmann's own dual vocation, as an artist and conservationist, but also suggests that paintings of Dachau's rare moorland landscape were not merely aesthetically pleasing depictions of the countryside but were imbued with a contemporary sense of awe and his own moral responsibility towards this region. A student of Hölzel's observed retrospectively that Dachau had a particular character that attracted artists. It was this character that Stockmann sought to preserve. In Norlind's memoirs he wrote that it was also the place, Dachau, which inspired him:

I became the owner of five singing nightingales and their nests, of a large rook colony of old buildings that had experienced sieges and lived through history, which bore all those secrets concealed within

¹⁹³ H. Stockmann, *Die Umgebung von Dachau*, Bayerischer Heimatschutz', Jahrgang 10, vol. 3 Munich, 1912, 39 (In nächster Nähe der Stadt München liegt ein Gebiet, das von den Malern sehr geschätzt, gewürdigt und fleißig besucht wird, das Gebiet um Dachau. Wie unvergesslich ist eine Wanderung auf Dachaus Höhenzug und amperauf' und amperwärts. Der die Höhe so stolz bekrönende Ort hat in seiner Umgebung eine landschaftliche Mannigfaltigkeit aufzuweisen, die wohl in der Umgegend von München nicht mehr gefunden wird. Im Norden Hügelland mit dem fruchtbaren Lehmboden, dem reichen Saatenbestand, dazwischen die Dörfchen mit den gotischen, Satteltürme tragenden Kirchen, im Süden Moorland mit schwarzer Erde und jenem üppigen Pflanzenwuchs, der Künstler, Naturfreund und Botaniker in gleiches Erstaunen setzt.)

old walls, of a castle ghost, a brook and of old trees, [...] and, naturally, of land.¹⁹⁴

The establishment of the *Volkskunst und Volkskunde* journal suggests a collective investment in the preservation of folk traditions for future generations. In their opening statement the authors wrote this message, addressed to its members, outlining their desire to protect what they saw as endemic to Bavarian culture.

The Bavarian Association for Folk Art and Ethnic Studies (...) has made it its task to collect lore that still exists in the village church, in house construction, in the furniture and decorations of a house, in household appliances, in the vernacular, in myths, customs and conventions, place names and family names. The association wants to maintain for the coming generations a picture of what life was like for our people in former times and to collect the leftovers from memorable times before they disappear in front of our very eyes in a contemporary world which strives to make everything the same.¹⁹⁵

Demonstrated by this excerpt from the Bavarian publication of *Volkskunst und Volkskunde*, it is suggested that preserving folk traditions was part of a Bavarian wide trend.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 125. (Ich wurde Eigentümer von fünf singenden Nachtigallen samt deren Nestern, einer großen Saatkrähen Kolonie von alten Gebäuden, die Belagerungen und Geschichte erlebt hatten, von all den Geheimnissen, die ein altes Gemäuer verbirgt, von einem Schlossgeist, von einem Bach und von alten Bäumen, [...] und natürlich von Grund und Pferden und Kühen und Gehöften und dergleichen.)

¹⁹⁵ A.U., *An unsere Mitglieder und Freunde*, 'Volkskunst und Volkskunde', Nr. 1, Munich, 1902, 1. (Der bayerische Verein für Volkskunst und Volkskunde (...) hat sich zur Aufgabe gemacht, die Überlieferungen zu sammeln, welche in der Dorfkirche, im Hausbau, in der Einrichtung und Ausschmückung des Hauses, im Hausgeräte, in Mundart, Sage, Sitte und Gebrauch, Orts- und Familiennamen noch erhalten sind. Er will unseren Nachkommen ein Bild von dem früheren Leben unseres Volkes erhalten und die Überreste aus denkwürdigen Zeiten sammeln, ehe sie vor unseren Augen in der alles gleichmachenden Gegenwart untergehen.)

The Neu-Dachau group were not directly involved in working with local publications in Dachau in order to further publicise the identity that they chose for the town, as the Eifel artists had been. Nor did they work with regional associations, as in Worpswede, in order to preserve the buildings that they saw as typical to the area. However, their images of the misty wetlands were as much a testament to an endangered way of life as were their paintings of peasants in traditional costume and Bavaria's rural Catholic population. Much has been made so far about the investment in Bavarian local and regional identities. In the following article, Shnidikus Welzel suggested in the Bavarian publication of *Volkskunst und Volkskunde* that the desire to preserve the countryside was a German characteristic, present in the national consciousness. This is a prime example of where local translates into national through issues of nature.

In the following paragraph, Welzel suggests, however, that Bavarian nature conservation was a national issue which relied on the support of central government in the north.

The joy in trees, plants and flowers is a native characteristic of the German being. Admittedly, as a result of the strong development of our society towards the economic side of life, the former reverence for tree and shrub has been disappearing. However, today many are once again listening to the warning voice which strives to make the public at large aware of the increasing desolation in our country; and if government, school and the press help us, then not too long from now, a new respect shall take root for those natural

forms from which our forefathers believed, more than anything else, they could hear the voice of God.¹⁹⁶

Welzel's article shows the struggle of protecting Bavaria's avenues threatened with extinction. The article is beautifully illustrated with photographs of Bavaria's oak tree alleys, forests and lakes.¹⁹⁷ [Fig. 17] Directly before the above paragraph, the author references another case that was won in Mecklenburg from 1908, when the local government protested to the Ministerial government in Prussia about the destruction of its trees. The above quoted paragraph calls for the coming together of various parties which can, as a united front, challenge the government's decision 'not only for our province (*Lande*) but for our lives.'¹⁹⁸ Neu-Dachau's success then lay in a mixture of the contemporary controversy of nature and their proximity to one of the artistic centres of Europe.

The artists' romantic depictions of Dachau were glorified by the author Paul Grabein in his best-selling novel about two of the artists in the group and their romances, *Die Moosswaige*¹⁹⁹[Fig. 18]. Figure 18 depicts Hölzel's painting with the same title as the novel, which helps to endorse and promotes the identity that the colony had shaped for the town. Contemporary literature about Dachau itself equally romanticized the landscape and traditional way of life of this old market town. Folk

¹⁹⁶ *Volkskunst und Volkskunde*, W. Shndikus 'Schutz der Straßenalleen', Year 8, Nr. 8, Munich, 1910, 95. (Die Freude an Baum, Pflanze und Blume ist ein eingeborener Zug deutschen Wesens. Freilich ist im Gefolge der starken Entwicklung unserer Volkskräfte nach der wirtschaftlichen Seite hin die alte Ehrfurcht vor Baum und Strauch geschwunden. Heute aber hören viele schon wieder auf die warnende Stimme, die zunehmende Verödung unseres Landes ins Bewußtsein der Allgemeinheit zu rufen sich bemüht; und wenn Regierung, Schule und Presse uns helfen, dann wird in nicht zu ferner Zeit eine neue Achtung eingewurzelt sein vor jenen Naturgebilden, aus welchen unsere Vorfahren vor anderen die Stimme der Gottheit zu vernehmen glaubten.

¹⁹⁷ Presumably the photographs were taken by the author of the article, but it is simply not stated in the text.

¹⁹⁸ W. Shnidikus 'Schutz der Straßenalleen', Year 8, Nr. 8, Munich, 1910, 96

magazines such as *Amperbote*, *Bayerischer Heimatschutz* and the *Volkskunst und Volkskunde* paid homage to the unique qualities of the countryside but go a step further in directly urging protection against 'the plundering of nature'.²⁰⁰ Artists, authors and local journalists all had an interest in promoting Dachau's heritage for financial gain through tourism. Despite the indication that the Neu-Dachau group were not directly involved in the politics of the landscape they painted, their work brought the image of this market town onto a national stage. Stockmann used the Neu-Dachau group as an invaluable propaganda tool to promote his association's cause.

It was not just the conservation of moors which was at stake, however. Dachau's character, as represented by artists and authors alike, was embroiled in a threatened sense of Bavarian identity, which associations such as the *Volkskunst und Volkskunde* aimed to protect: the landscape being integral to the state's identity as its obvious defining feature. In the first issue of the publication, jointly written text opens the journal, entitled *An unsere Mitglieder und Freunde*.²⁰¹ The authors conclude this paragraph stating that the association 'strives to strengthen the love of our ancestors, our homeland, and our fatherland.'²⁰² A later issue affirms 'Unser Verein und der Landesauschluß für Naturpflege dienen der Erhaltung der Eigenart und der Schönheit unserer bayerischen Heimat.'²⁰³ Contemporary literature such as that of Hermann Stockmann and the two statements from the Bavarian folk magazine pursue an interest in preserving Bavaria's

²⁰⁰ A.U., 'Schützt unsere Heimat', *Volkskunst und Volkskunde* No. 9, Munich, 1910, 246

²⁰¹ To our Members and Friends

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *Volkskunst und Volkskunde*, 'Schutz der Straßenalleen', Issue 8, Nr. 8, 1910, 87.

agricultural and cultural heritage as a way of expressing regional sentiment. The character of the town, which Stockmann sought to protect, was brought into the limelight by the *Neu Dachau* group in their paintings which emphasised what they saw as particular to the town. Between the years 1871 and 1914 regional patriotism reached a new height in Bavaria. The artists in the *Neu Dachau* group painted three elements which were key to Bavaria and Dachau, as illustrated by contemporary literature: landscape, Catholicism and *Tracht*. All three of these subjects became part of wider newly articulated cultural expression of regional patriotism. The moors, which became a part of the *Neu Dachau's* vision of the landscape, were in danger of being drained. Blackbourn shows that much of Germany had once been moorland, Dachau's landscape was part of a contested dialogue engaged in the debate over nature conservation.²⁰⁴ The indication that the featured natural world of Dachau was seen to be under threat, makes even the pure landscapes by the art group part of a contested political battle. The moorlands were rare and part of Germany's coveted *Urpast*. They represented both Dachau's exceptional qualities and what was seen as representational of traditional Germany. In John Berger's case, the landscape paintings could only be fully understood as part of the post 1871 mentality in Bavaria, with its heightened sense of regional patriotism and during the second wave of the industrial revolution in Germany where waterlogged moors were increasingly under threat from industry. It has been argued that Austria and Bavaria shared more of a common culture

²⁰⁴ Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature*, 136

than the state and the rest of Germany.²⁰⁵ Ties of regional alliance to Austria from Bavaria were obviously surpassed by national allegiance in a cumulative sense to help the war effort. By the outbreak of the First World War national identity surpassed regional allegiance, and this way of seeing the *Neu Dachau* work was lost.

The images of Dachauers in Catholic procession were also highly charged expressions of regional identity. The artists depicted the Dachauers as if they were a dying 'breed', under threat from Prussian normalisation thus increased their 'otherness' status. In this way the *Tracht* was an extension of the Dachauer's 'otherness', highlighting their differences on both a Bavarian and more local level. The images by *Neu Dachau* then, are not merely experiments in *pleinairism*, as a second rate simulation of the Barbizon school, as some have suggested. Neither were they mere reactions against industrialisation and capitalism, as others have argued. They were images that expressed the political tensions between the north and south. The artists represented the Dachauers as upholding Bavarian traditions as an oppressed minority, whose very countryside was under threat from extinction. By using a framework of Bavarian identity the *Neu Dachau* group began a phase of turning the town into a 'typical' and 'traditional' old Bavarian town that was compounded by Hermann Stockmann and endorsed at the highest level at the Jubilee.

²⁰⁵ K. O'Donnell, N. Reagin, R. Bridenthal, *The Heimat Abroad: the boundaries of Germanness*, Michigan, 2005, 230.

III Worpswede and the Construction of a Traditional Farming Lower Saxon

Identity

Fritz Mackensen and Otto Modersohn founded the Worpswede colony before the turn of the century. They were later joined by Hans am Ende, Heinrich Vogeler and Fritz Overbeck.²⁰⁶ A few miles from Bremen, it was a fairly unremarkable countryside village. Its economy lay in selling turf for burning until the artists settled there and made it one of the most successful artists' colonies in Germany. Subsequently, Worpswede has enjoyed a great deal of art-historical interest. However not all of the literature is of a scholarly nature.²⁰⁷

The writing on Worpswede can be divided into four themes: literature aimed at the art lover and art tourist to Worpswede (i), factual and, to a large extent uncritical, biographical literature (ii), monographs which address the artists' work after 1914 and retraces their history to Worpswede (iii) and two books which take a social, critical/analytical approach to the artists' colony (iv).

(i) Literature aimed at tourists to Worpswede

Literature such as *Künstlerkolonie Worpswede*²⁰⁸ (2006) and *Worpswede und das Teufelsmoor*²⁰⁹ (2003) popularise the group, being aimed at the interested art lover. The books are well presented picture books, which give a background on the artists' colony. Their literature is based upon secondary sources, which are outlined below. They take the largely unquestioned, but widely articulated view that the artists' colony in Worpswede was similar to those in the rest of Europe. The assertion is that they too had fled the rigid urban academies in favour of an

²⁰⁶ S. Weltge- Wortmann, *Die Ersten Maler in Worpswede*, Bremen, 2003, 8.

²⁰⁷ Ie.(eds.) W.-D. Stock and R. Noeres, *Worpswede eine Künstlerkolonie um 1900*, Bremen 2002 and F. Berchtig, *Künstlerkolonie Worpswede*, Munich, 2006.

²⁰⁸ F. Berchtig, *Künstlerkolonie Worpswede*, München, 2006.

²⁰⁹ A. Brenken, *Worpswede und das Teufelsmoor*, Hamburg, 2003.

alternative rural, idyllic existence based on the model of the Barbizon school of painting.²¹⁰

This chapter intends to show that, although the artists in the Worpswede colony originally modelled themselves on the Barbizon school, their technique was quite different. Unlike the Barbizon, the Worpswede artists' regional identity was at the heart of their painting, as was involvement in regional associations. Identity in Worpswede is understood to be essentially regional rather than local or national. The artists did not distinguish between Worpswede's identity and Lower Saxony's but described themselves as homogenous in their publication *Niedersachsen* - this will be discussed further in more depth later.

(ii) Biographical literature

Die Ersten Maler in Worpswede (2003) and *Worpswede. Eine Künstlerkolonie um 1900* (2002) both touch upon issues of regional identity. They both mention regional identity relating to the so-called *Heimat* movement.²¹¹ They also follow a typical approach to the artists' work, which is a chronological biography of each of the artists with an introduction on the particular landscape that the artists painted. The artists' contemporary biographers such as Rainer Maria Rilke, Hans Bethge and Paul Warnke first used this format. I will return to their work later in this chapter, as they play a significant part in my argument.

²¹¹ W. D. Stock, Rainer. Noeres (eds.) *Worpswede eine Künstlerkolonie um 1900*, Bremen 2002, 63 and S. W.-Wortmann, *Die Ersten Maler in Worpswede*, 1979, Bremen, 198.

A biographical approach does not provide a comparison between the artists, which negates the opportunity to source a common Worpswede manifesto. Nor does it consider the wider social context. However, such an approach gives a useful outline of the artists' personal lives and careers, treating the artists as individuals. By using the biographical approach, the authors do not mention the artists' involvement in the regional associations. Artists played a key role in rebuilding Worpswede's identity both ideologically and, as led by the artist Heinrich Vogeler, physically.

One of the authors Weltge-Wortmann, also relies partially on Paula Modersohn-Becker's journals to give testament to the original Worpswede artists' work. Wortmann includes her as a Worpswede artist, despite the fact she was not one of the first generation of founding members of the colony.²¹² This use of Paula Modersohn-Becker's diaries is not uncommon. Written by a highly articulate individual, her letters and diaries give a fascinating insight into the colony. Her diaries can only offer a limited narrative of the Worpswede artists' work because of the problems involved in books relying on autobiographical writing. Her work is also very different from the first generation of Worpswede artists. The Worpsweders made a conscious refusal to be influenced by the impressionists but M Becker paints with impasto in an impressionistic style and favoured the genre of portraiture rather than landscape. Even in the few of Modersohn-Becker's landscapes, she did not conform to the Worpswede style. This is demonstrated by her painting *Moorkanal* of c. 1900 a landscape view depicted from a very similar angle by founding member of the artists' colony Hans am

²¹² Wortmann, *Die Ersten Maler in Worpswede*, for examples see 14, 21, 47, 202.

Ende, *Sommertag* of c. 1900 [Figs. 1 and 2]. Modersohn-Becker's impressionistic depiction of the same scene makes Am Ende's naturalistic work seem old-fashioned in comparison. M Becker could not be said to have been an active member of a group mentality since her work was both so different from those in the other Worpswede members and only known to have been seen by two members of the group until her first exhibition in Bremen in 1899.²¹³ Furthermore, the inclusion of Paula M-Becker as a Worpswede artist rebuffs a consistent argument that attempts to define a collective philosophy for the core artists in the group. Hence, these various arguments seem to speak against an inclusion of Modersohn-Becker in the Worpswede group.

The author of *Die Ersten Maler in Worpswede*, Weltge-Wortmann, explains that with the exception of Modersohn-Becker and, to an extent, Heinrich Vogeler, the artists painted in a traditional style. She explains that others have argued that this was because the artists were geographically isolated from any artistic influence from art academies.²¹⁴ Weltge-Wortmann contends that early successes for the artists meant that they had a market for their work and therefore it was unnecessary to seek new audiences through changes in their artistic perceptions.²¹⁵ It will be argued here that the artists consciously chose a traditional style, which reflected their northern identity through the influence of the Dutch. With the exception of Hans am Ende, who studied at the Munich

²¹³ P. Selz, *German Expressionist Painting*, London, 1977, 44

²¹⁴ S. W. Wortmann, *Die Ersten Maler in Worpswede*, 198.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 199.

Academy, all the artists had studied at the internationally renowned Dusseldorf Academy that specialised in landscape painting.²¹⁶

Worpswede, eine deutsche Künstlerkolonie um 1900 (2002) follows much the same format as *Die ersten Maler in Worpswede*. This book, however, relies a great deal more on primary source material. The first chapter is a series of quotes from the artists' letters, diaries and publications. The rest of the book is a collection of essays; this again prevents a fluid argument running through the book. Karl Veit Riedel, one of the essayists, acknowledges the significance of the *Heimat* movement in his contribution centred on Fritz Mackensen.²¹⁷ It will be argued here that the *Heimat* movement was significant to all the artists in the group, not just Mackensen. Riedel uses one of Mackensen's novels, which he wrote in 1947, to illustrate his point.²¹⁸ Subsequently, he retraces the steps of the *Heimat* movement to the 1890s.²¹⁹ This sort of retrospective analysis could be seen to be misleading. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, terminology such as *Heimat* carried different connotations before and after the First World War. Once the Nazis came to power, the word became loaded with nationalistic ideology. This will be covered in more depth later in the thesis.

In the course of political events of the twentieth century, Vogeler's and Mackensen's work altered in style and content significantly. The author continues to acknowledge the influence that the book, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, had on Mackensen. Riedel, however, dismisses the book as overemotional, naive

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 15, 36, 64, 82, 102.

²¹⁷ W.-Dietmar Stock and R. Noeres, *Worpswede eine Künstlerkolonie um 1900*, Bremen, 2002, 63.

²¹⁸ W.-D. Stock and R. Noeres, *Worpswede eine Künstlerkolonie um 1900*, 63.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

and superficial.²²⁰ The book's connection with Nazi ideology, its later anti-Semitic editions, the scrambled way in which it is written and its idealism has meant that it is frequently dismissed by academics. The significance of the book to the artists will be examined here.

In another chapter in *Worpswede eine Künstlerkolonie um 1900* on Mackensen's colleague, Heinrich Vogeler, Karl-Robert Schütze explains that the artists' aim to rebuild Worpswede was motivated by the ideology behind the British Garden City Movement. He explains that, although Vogeler's paintings and drawings were fantastical the artist realised the gravity of the effect of the industrial revolution on his society. Through the 'back to the land' premise the artist discovered his social conscience and designed housing for Worpswede.²²¹ I will show here that through his designs for the village the artist was able to market the village as his own through his artistic flair. He subsequently claimed that the buildings he had designed were traditional to Worpswede. It will be argued that Vogeler's keen sense of regional identity was inspired by the Langbehn's book and subsequently motivated his (and his colleagues') involvement in regional associations and their associated publications. Schütze noted that the Worpswede artists protested against the commercialisation of Worpswede.²²² He claims that they had tried to create a colony that was real, truthful, honest and deep, as a contrast to modern society.²²³ This proclaimed view of the Worpswede artists turning their backs on modern civilisation will be called into question here. Vogeler, in particular, had consciously brought an art-buying

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 64

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 108

²²² *Ibid.*, 111

²²³ *Ibid.*, 111

market into Worpswede and sanctioned the train line which ran from Bremen to the village with his designs of the stations.

It is generally accepted that the Worpswede group made a dramatic breakthrough into the mainstream art world at the *Glaspalast* in Munich in 1895. *Der Durchbruch* (1995) gives an interesting account of this.²²⁴ The author is, again, Karl-Robert Schütze. He has reprinted contemporary articles on the artists' colony to prove what a sensation they were.²²⁵ The book also has good quality images of their work, which was exhibited at the 1895 exhibition. As a whole, however, the book lacks critical commentary and does not explain in the author's own words why the artists were such a success. The examination discussed in this thesis will take a different methodology and will bring new primary sources to the fore.

The authors of the book '*In erster Linie Hausbau...*' *Heinrich Vogeler und die Bremer Reformarchitekten*²²⁶(2002) fall short of answering key questions about Vogeler's motivation for his designs for the village.²²⁷ Hugo Wagner, a reform architect, claims this book was essential to the development of Vogeler's ideas for Worpswede.²²⁸ The argument taken here will be that Vogeler was already keen to act upon his concerns for post-industrialised Germany before his involvement with Wagner.

²²⁴ K. R. Schütze, *Der Durchbruch: die Worpsweder Maler in Bremen und im Münchener Glaspalast 1895 : Fritz Mackensen, Hans am Ende, Otto Modersohn, Fritz Overbeck, Heinrich Vogeler*, Lilienthal, 1995.

²²⁵ Schütze, *Der Durchbruch*, 46-49

²²⁶ B. C. Arnold, (ed.), *In erster Linie Hausbau' Heinrich Vogeler und die Bremer Reformarchitekten*, Bonn, 2002.

²²⁷ *Ibid.* 85.

²²⁸ *Ibid.* 111

Retracing political history approach

The two books *Von Worpswede nach Moskau, Heinrich Vogeler Ein Künstler zwischen den Zeiten*²²⁹ (1972) and *Landschaft, Licht und Niederdeutscher Mythos*²³⁰ (2000) both analyse the artists' production after 1933 in an attempt to stitch together a patchwork history of the political implications of the artists' work. The authors argue that the seeds of Fritz Mackensen's and Heinrich Vogeler's politics were sown even before the First World War. *Von Worpswede nach Moskau* focuses on Heinrich Vogeler and essentially the artist's work in Moscow. The artist's time in Worpswede is seen as an idyllic parallel to where he painted images from his fantasy fairyland, as opposed to his futuristic visions of a Russian utopia. The author describes Vogeler's time in Worpswede with reference to the artist's marriage, which ended in 1910.²³¹ The artist was almost obsessed with depicting images of his wife during their time together in Worpswede.²³² As a result of Petzet's polarized approach to Vogeler he does not acknowledge the social issues that the artist propagated before 1914.

The author of *Landschaft, Licht und Niederdeutscher Mythos* introduce Fritz Mackensen as being political even during the Kaiser's time, suggesting this as almost proof that the artist was already in a prime position to become a Nazi sympathiser. The author continues to list his involvement in right wing politics to prove that assertion. Politically, since the time of the German Emperors, he

²²⁹ H. W. Petzet, *Von Worpswede nach Moskau. Heinrich Vogeler. Ein Künstler zwischen den Zeiten*, Köln, 1972.

²³⁰ K. Artinger, *Landschaft, Licht und Niederdeutscher Mythos: die Worpswede Kunst und der Nationalsozialismus*, Weimar, 2000.

²³¹ H. W. Petzet, *Von Worpswede nach Moskau Heinrich Vogeler*, 65-68.

²³² *Ibid.*, 66.

has been a strict member of the German National People's Party, after the First World War a member of the "Stahlhelm" association of veterans and in 1933 co-founder of the extremely aggressive "Combat Group for German Culture" (Worpswede local group); during the Nazi regime he became one of the most influential personalities among the Worpswede group of artists. The fact that he became the first Director of the "Nordic University of the Arts" in Bremen and became a member of the NSDAP in 1938/39 were the logical consequence of his biography.²³³

The authors use information such as this to show that eventually the artists' colony perfectly complemented Nazi ideology. In addition the authors use the painting *Gottesdienst* by Mackensen as an example of his anti-modernist approach to painting, which again leads directly into the values of National Socialism.²³⁴ Words that the artists used such as *Heimat*, again, had a different connotation before the Nazi period but are quoted liberally in this book in order to further connect Nazi ideology to the first generation of Worpswede artists.²³⁵ Despite the fact that the author considers the Langbehn book as influential in creating a nationalist socialist methodology in Worpswede, it is the only monograph to discuss the impact of the book on the artists' colony in detail. The author analyses the Worpswede paintings while citing Langbehn's book, in order to prove that the artists (with Mackensen in particular) were racist. Kai Artinger, the author, states that in Langbehn's first chapter one can find the source of the

²³³ A. Strohmeier, K. Artinger, F. Krogmann, *Landschaft, Licht und Niederdeutscher Mythos*, 14. (Politisch seit der Kaiserzeit ein strammer Deutsch-Nationaler, nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg Mitglied des Veteranenverbandes "Stahlhelm", 1933 Mitbegründer des äußerst aggressiven "Kampfbundes für Deutsche Kultur" (Ortsgruppe Worpswede) wurde er in der NS-Zeit zur einflussreichsten Persönlichkeit unter den Worpsweder Künstlern. Daß er erster Direktor der "Nordischen Kunsthochschule" in Bremen wurde und 1938/39 in die NSDAP eintrat, lag in der Konsequenz dieser Biographie.)

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 130

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 118.

founding philosophy for the group.²³⁶ Even Fritz Stern author of *The Politics of Cultural Despair: a study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* concurs that Langbehn was not a racist doubtless because the principles behind fascism were too scientific for him.²³⁷

The idealisation of Mackensen's 'healthy' farmers in *Gottesdienst unter freiem Himmel* Artinger finds particularly suspicious.²³⁸ There was a contemporary theme in European painting to idealise country life as the polar opposite to the moral corruption of the cities. The dissatisfaction with aggressive capitalism was a complaint expressed throughout Europe at this time yet in German literature it is often traced directly into Nazism as though this was the outcome of cultural pessimism.

This thesis is only concerned with the pre-war years, therefore, the subsequent politicisation of Worpswedes art is not addressed here. It will be emphasised that the Worpswede artists expressed a regional identity celebrating the individual character of the provinces, which fed into a sense of national identity.

(iv) A social approach

The final analysis, of the style of literature on the Worpswede artists, is those that take a social approach on the colony, in a similar vain as Janet Wolff has

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 118.

²³⁷ Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: a study in the Rise of Germanic Ideology*, London, 1974, 142.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 138.

suggested;²³⁹ in her book *The Social Production of Art* Wolff argues that the common view of the artist as isolated from society is a falsity, an invented nineteenth-century romantic vision.²⁴⁰ Wolff claims that all artists are involved in a form of capitalist production. Both of the following authors claim that the artists in Worpswede were involved in a type of cultural tourism.²⁴¹ These three insightful texts are *Worpswede, Kulturgeschichte eines Künstlerdorfes*,²⁴² (1989) *Rural artists' colonies in Europe 1870-1910* (2001),²⁴³ and 'North to South: Paradigm Shifts in European Art and Tourism, 1880-1920' in *Visual Culture and Tourism* (2003).²⁴⁴ The authors of the first book acknowledge that Worpswede was a weekend retreat for tourists and as such was an easy market for the artists to sell their work to.²⁴⁵ However, the authors point out that the village had been a successful tourist location before the artists arrived and do not suggest that they had actually actively encouraged the tourists to visit.²⁴⁶ The authors also say that Vogeler had intended to protect the existing character of the village in his designs for the train stations.²⁴⁷ It is reasoned here that the artists' actions, as directed by Vogeler, were out of a desire to create a countryside style identity for regional buildings in the village, thus branding the village as their own. Vogeler himself admitted in his memoirs that the inspiration for his designs was a mixture of gothic and Renaissance architectural elements and therefore not

²³⁹ It is important to note that they do not take a sociological methodology in the Pierre Bourdieu sense; they do not tackle issues of the taste of the patron as defined by their class, culture and education as outlined in *Distinction*, P. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, London, 1979, 5-7.

²⁴⁰ J. Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, London, 1981, 11.

²⁴¹ J. Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, London, 1981, 11.

²⁴² G. Boulboulé and M. Zeiss, *Worpswede Kulturgeschichte eines Künstlerdorfes*, Köln, 1989.

²⁴³ N. Lübbren, *Rural Artists' Colonies in Europe 1870-1910*, New Jersey, 2001.

²⁴⁴ D. Crouch and N. Lübbren (eds), *Visual Culture and Tourism*, Oxford, 2003.

²⁴⁵ Boulboulé and Zeiss, *Worpswede*, 90.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 92

directly developed from the style of the farm houses of Lower Saxony which were abundant in Worpswede.²⁴⁸

Nina Lübbren, author of *Rural Artists' Colonies in Europe 1870-1910*, and the chapter called 'North and South' in *Visual Culture and Tourism* explains in her first book that the success of the artists' work was in creating what she calls place myth, by reiterating themes of the Worpswede landscape in their paintings.²⁴⁹ Lübbren observes pictorial patterns in the Worpswede artists' work which can be seen in the two examples she gives of Otto Modersohn's *Herbstmorgen am Moorkanal* (1895) and Hans am Ende's *Sommertag* (1901) [Figs. 3 and 2]. She argues that the depiction of straight canals, lines of birches and thatched cottages places the works in an identifiable, traditional setting, which became recognisable to the audience. This thesis picks up from where Lübbren left off and discusses her idea of *place myth* in a socio-political context with respect to regional identity. Although Lübbren uses some excellent primary source material to state her case, she does not quote from Vogeler's letters. Vogeler's letters show how the artist wrote to potential biographers of the colony about his opinions on the way in which they wrote about Worpswede.

In her chapter called 'North and South' Lübbren argues that the Worpswede artists treated tourists with little more than contempt.²⁵⁰ She argues that the reason that the artists painted grey skies was because they were portraying an iconography that was 'anti-tourist', in other words they were expounding a

²⁴⁸ Arnold, *In erster Linie Hausbau*, 7

²⁴⁹ Lübbren, *Rural artists' colonies in Europe 1870-1914*, 2001, 118

²⁵⁰ 'North and South: Paradigm Shifts in European Art and Tourism, 1880-1920' Lübbren in *Visual Culture and Tourism*, D. Crouch and N. Lübbren, (eds), 130-131.

visual culture, which would not attract the beach day-tripper.²⁵¹ On the same subject yet taking an opposing approach, it will be shown here that the Worpswede artists may not have written with much admiration for tourists, but the first generation of Worpswede artists did their utmost to attract the tourist. For example, they built a train station in their village, sold postcards to the day-tripper and established publications glorifying the natural, local wonders.

Worpswede was a relatively new village, the bog was drained in 1760 and thereafter colonised.²⁵² The village had not thought about conservation until the artists in the colony began a campaign to raise their own profile.²⁵³ As Schütze outlined, the artists designed buildings, organised building master classes and created a set of guidelines for the village. It will be argued here that they designed a character for the village, which the artists deemed as quaint and traditional, but was not necessarily endemic to Worpswede.²⁵⁴ From the stance of such authority the artists were able to embellish the existing characteristics of Lower Saxony, conceive of new architectural styles and claim their own building conventions as emblematic of the area. As principal leaders of a cultural capital rather than as acquiescent benefactors, as in the case of the Dachau artists' colony, or indirect contributors to the identity of the region, as in the case of the Eifel artists, they were able to control the way in which the town was perceived by others. This highly orchestrated manoeuvre was a step further than any other German artists' colony had managed to achieve before this. The point being made is that Vogeler's actions came, not merely out of a heightened sense of

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 130.

²⁵² Boulboulé and Zeiss, *Worpswede*, 11.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 90-95.

²⁵⁴ Karl-Robert Schütze, *Heinrich Vogeler: Leben und Architektonisches Werk* Berlin, 1980, 31.

artistic flair, but from a conscious reflection of contemporary issues, as well as an endorsement of regional identity. The Worpswede artists' work was so successful that they were able to start a small tourist industry from their work in Worpswede.²⁵⁵ It will be demonstrated that Vogeler used his excellent marketing skills to attract an art buying public to Worpswede. Therefore, the methodology taken here will be similar to the literature discussed above since it is a social analysis. It will show that the artists tapped into contemporary perceptions about landscape, whether consciously or unconsciously as part of a form of artistic capitalist production. This follows Wolff's theory that artists are not inspired by some sort of divine genius but by their creative output. It will be seen as part of 'the complex product of economic, social and ideological factors, mediated through the formal structures of the text (literary or other), and owing its existence to the particular practice of the located individual.'²⁵⁶ The formal structure, which Wolff discusses, is apparent from the artists' interest in the Langbehn book. It is examined in further detail below.

Rembrandt als Erzieher:

(i) Langbehn's philosophy and its influence on the Worpswede artists

The secondary biographical literature on Worpswede concurs with the line taken here: that Langbehn's Rembrandt book clearly influenced the Worpswede artists [Fig. 4]. However, although literature about the book exists, (outlined below) none of these texts give an in-depth analysis of what the book said, nor do they

²⁵⁵ Brenken, *Worpswede und das Teufelsmoor*, 14

²⁵⁶ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 139

state exactly how the book influenced the artists' production.²⁵⁷ It will be examined here, what the artists said about the book, how Langbehn's book motivated the artists' work and influenced how they wrote about themselves and determined a subtext about regional identity in Lower Saxony in their paintings.

There are few authors that have examined Langbehn's work as an independent text. Fritz Stern is one author who gives worthy insight into Langbehn's philosophy in his book *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of Germanic Ideology* (1974). He calls the book 'the great literary fad of 1890' and quotes numerous reviews to prove his point.²⁵⁸ The author, however, only mentions Langbehn with regards to German art in passing and mentions nothing about the Worpswede artists specifically. Stern quotes a number of the continuously revised later editions of Langbehn's book, which became more anti-Semitic and anti-modernist as time went by. Thus, Stern maps a rise of Germanic ideology to which he argues Langbehn's book strongly contributed and subsequently informed National Socialism. This thesis is only concerned with the 1890 edition, which the artists are known to have read.²⁵⁹ Stern's book is very much written from a standard perspective of German history in the 1970s and early 1980s. This perspective viewed the Holocaust as an inevitable outcome of a Germanic ideology of which Langbehn's is an example

²⁵⁷ eg. Stock and Noers, *Worpswede: eine Künstlerkolonie um 1900*, 17

²⁵⁸ Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, 155.

²⁵⁹ M. Bohlmann-Modersohn, *Otto Modersohn, Leben und Werk*, Bremen, 2005, 45.

Stern pinpoints literature such as Langbehn's as a product of the conservative revolution.²⁶⁰ The argument presented here will be that the artists in the Worpswede colony chose to interpret the book with a predominately regionalist agenda but certainly not with a view of its influence on the rise of National Socialism. Principally they always aligned themselves with the village, Worpswede, and to a lesser degree, the province, Lower Saxony.²⁶¹

In the 1890s all the artists in the founding group *Worpswede* read and appreciated, albeit in different ways, as outlined below, the work of Julius Langbehn (1851-1907) who lamented the loss of German identity in contemporary art. Langbehn was a cultural pessimist who was critical of liberalism, academia and modern society. The author called for German artists to take their inspiration from those working in northern Europe rather than from the pervasive French Impressionists and in so doing to re-establish German artistic identity.²⁶² As will be discussed, he quoted famous German authors to illustrate his point that there had been a time when the country was secure in its cultural wealth and therefore had a strong identity.²⁶³

Rembrandt als Erzieher was a book that encapsulated a time of burgeoning angst about the future of Germany. Written in the tumultuous 1890s, Fritz Stern interpreted the book as both anti-modern and a precursor to National Socialism.²⁶⁴ As previously mentioned, later editions are certainly overtly anti-

²⁶⁰ Stern, *The politics of cultural despair*, xxiii.

²⁶¹ With the exception of Carl Vinnen who was not a full member of the artists colony Worpswede anyway.

²⁶² Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 19

²⁶³ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, e.g. 46

²⁶⁴ Stern, *The politics of cultural despair*, 139

Semitic.²⁶⁵ This blatant anti-Semitism, (footnoted) only became so explicit in the later editions and thus explains why the Worpswede artists did not expound overtly nationalistic interpretations of the book. The label 'Nazi literature' is rather limiting for this text, since there are numerous other ideologies at play in Langbehn's work and by labelling in such a limiting manner, negates a broader critical approach. As Fritz Stern argued, Langbehn's book was part of a wider ideology of its time, of which Paul Legarde and Moeller van der Bruck were fellow exponents. This ideology regarded Germany's natural environment and northern culture as highly intrinsic to its identity.²⁶⁶ Inspired by the tenet of the Langbehn book, the artists went on to create an identity for the village and its outlying areas. The evidence for this will be described, largely, through the design of new buildings and building regulations. Moreover, it will be argued that the identities the artists created and the social changes they encouraged, led by Heinrich Vogeler, were largely inspired by the Langbehn book.

(ii) The Success of Langbehn's *Rembrandt* in general and in view of the Worpsweders

Langbehn was a failed academic but achieved enormous success with his *Rembrandt* book.²⁶⁷ The Germans welcomed the author's dissatisfaction with modern culture. Stern wrote that book dealers claimed the book to be 'the most important work of the century'²⁶⁸. It was discussed in every leading newspaper

²⁶⁵ ie. 'The modern Jew has no religion, no character, no home, no children. He is a piece of humanity that has become sour ...' Langbehn, 49th edition, 348

²⁶⁶ Stern, *The politics of cultural despair*, 5

²⁶⁷ Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, 100-105

²⁶⁸ Cited after Leo Berg, "Monsieur Chauvin" als Philosoph, " *Zwischen zwei Jahrhunderten. Gesammelte Essays*, Frankfurt am Main, 1896, 434, in Stern, *The politics of cultural despair*, 153.

and art review of the day and sold exceedingly well; 60,000 copies were sold in its first year alone and more than 100,000 copies sold in its first ten years.²⁶⁹ Originally published 'by a German', it appeared as though it was for everyman from everyman. Langbehn was concerned about Germany's mounting dependence on a consumer economy and its growing reverence for science rather than religion. With the end of the Bismarck era, the very embodiment of the old order, Langbehn's central concern was what Germany had become at the turn of the twentieth century. With so many conflicting interest groups and divergent political factions, what would Germany stand for? The question, Langbehn believed, was best left to artists, architects and writers to answer; the root of national identity lay in the nation's culture.²⁷⁰ He asserted that northern and southern Europe must have different cultural expressions not only because of their different climates but also because of their distinct Christian dogmas.²⁷¹ He venerated German cultural heroes of the past such as Beethoven, Goethe, Mozart, Schiller and Schinkel and protested that there were no such present day icons.²⁷² He complained that the brain of Germany was defunct.²⁷³ He called for a national art, which would be individual enough to reflect the German character but also one that was fixed in a location, which was identifiably German. It will be shown here that Rembrandt was a symbol for the Worpswede artists as he was for Langbehn.

The importance of *Rembrandt als Erzieher* to the art lover, as well as to the Worpswede artists, means that the introduction is quoted here at length. The

²⁶⁹ Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, 155-156.

²⁷⁰ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 26

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 22-24.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 2.

following is a passage that is a tirade against modern culture, and is headed *Signs of Decline*.

It has long since become a well-known secret that the German people currently finds itself in a state of slow, and some say, fast decline. The scientific world has scattered in all directions, has flown into specialism; when it comes to thought in the world of literature, there is a distinct lack of epoch-making individuals; although there are some significant masters in the visual arts, this field has dispensed with its monumentalism and therefore its best effect; musicians are seldom, while music-makers abound.²⁷⁴

Langbehn argued here that science had replaced spirituality and creativity. As a result he attested that contemporary art lacked depth. He attested that German culture needed an art form with a definite character. Langbehn suggests that art needed to take a moral tack for the sake of his country's people, who were in need of direction by the cultural elite of Germany. The case is made here that the Worpswede group offered, in Langbehn's terms, a regional identity and, at times, a moral code that was reflected in their landscape and genre scenes. Langbehn elucidates more freely in the following passage on the importance of regional identity in German painting.

And this can only take place by being responsive to the special local character of the individual regions in Germany; only in this way can we

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1 (Es ist nachgerade zum öffentlichen Geheimniß geworden, des deutschen Volkes sich gegenwärtig in einem Zustande des langsamen, Einige meinen auch des rapiden Verfalls befindet. Die Wissenschaft zerstückt allseitig in Spezialismus; auf dem Gebiet des Denkens wie der schönen Literatur fehlt es an epochemachenden Individualitäten; die bildende Kunst, obwohl durch bedeutende Meister vertreten, entbehrt doch der Monumalität und damit ihrer besten Wirkung; Musiker sind selten, Musikanten zahllos.)

once again find the way to distinctness, to artistic production. The national character must be studied in its living fauna and not in its fossils. The wandering soul of the Germans, which nowadays roams in every corner of the earth and heavens, must find its way again to the soils of its homeland; the painter from the Holstein region should paint “Holsteinian”, the Thuringian painter should paint “Thuringian” and the Bavarian painters should paint “Bavarian”: through and through, internally and externally, graphically and spiritually.²⁷⁵

Langbehn indicated here that each province in Germany had its own identity and that artists should reflect this particular character in their paintings. The artists in the Worpswede group took this theory a step further and were keen to develop a style which not only reflected the province, Lower Saxony, but more specifically depicted the identity of the village Worpswede in their landscapes. Furthermore, the artists expressed their attachment to Lower Saxony and Worpswede through the regional publications they were involved in producing.

Throughout the book Langbehn stressed the importance of individuality. He saw the German soul as individual, strong and essentially northern. The character of the nation’s soul was reflected, he believed, in its landscape. If one could capture the essence of the landscape then one understood the German soul. Langbehn gives a metaphor to illustrate his point. The author wrote that just as there are trees such as oaks, firs and palm trees so there is German, Greek and French

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 19. (Und das kann nur geschehen durch ein Eingehen auf den besonderen lokalen Charakter der einzelnen Gegenden Deutschlands; dadurch allein kann man wieder zur Verschiedenheit, künstlerischen Produktion gelangen. Den Volkscharakter muß man in seiner lebendigen Fauna, nicht in seinen Versteinerungen studieren. Die irrende Seele der Deutschen, welche sich künstlerisch jetzt in allen Erd- und Himmelgegenden umhertreibt, muß sich wieder an den heimatlichen Boden binden; der holsteinische Maler soll holsteinisch der thüringische thüringisch, der bairische bairisch (sic) malen: durch und durch, innerlich und äußerlich, gegenständlich wie geistig.

art²⁷⁶; therefore a country's art should be as unique as its landscape. The Worpswede artists accentuated what they saw as unique to Worpswede in their paintings, the thatched roofs, the flat lands and the quaint little boats the locals used to transport turf to the city. The artists had answered Langbehn's request for an art, which expounded distinctive qualities. Art critics quickly caught on. One such reporter described the Worpsweders' exhibition in Bremen as: 'etwas so Neues, Originelles, Ursprüngliches allgemeinste Aufmerksamkeit, wie es auf diesem Gebiete hier kaum dagewesen'²⁷⁷.

The Worpswede circle had responded to Langbehn's call for an art form that reflected the German *Länder*. The artists claimed that they had discovered a unique village with its own special character. This is expressed by Modersohn in his first impression of the village,

I found a highly original village which made quite an exotic impression on me; the hilly, sandy ground in the village itself, the green, moss-covered straw roofs, and to all sides (as far as the eye could see) everything was as vast and as big as at the seaside.²⁷⁸

From analysis of the literature, it has been established that the Worpswede artist's move to the countryside was part of an exodus by artists across Europe. As Otto Modersohn revealed in his diary, it made economic sense for artists to move out of the cities.²⁷⁹ However, what is new in the approach taken here is the suggestion that the Langbehn book in particular, emphasised the uniqueness of

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 26.

²⁷⁷ Stock and Nores, *Worpswede eine Künstlerkolonie um 1900*, 23.

²⁷⁸ Modersohn, *Otto Modersohn Leben und Werk*, 37.

²⁷⁹ Otto Modersohn's Diary, Otto Modersohn Museum 1894/5, 1894, 75. (Ich fand ein höchst originelles Dorf, das auf mich einen durchaus fremdartigen Eindruck machte; der hügelige, sandige Boden im Dorfe selbst, die großen bemoosten Strohdächer, und nach allen Seiten (so viel man sehen konnte) alles so weit und groß wie am Meer.)

northern Germany and stressed the importance of the responsibility of the country's artists to reflect this in their work. Working in Worpswede, in northern Germany, the artists were ideally placed to acquiesce to Langbehn's request.

(iii) Diverse interpretations of Langbehn within the Worpswede circle

As asserted above, the Langbehn book had a significant impact on the Worpswede artists. Each of the artists in the group embraced particular qualities of the Langbehn book. These were expressed in their letters, diaries, publications, in their actions and of course in their paintings, as is outlined below.

For Carl Vinnen, the book attested that the German nation should value its own art as highly as it values other European paintings (essentially, French art).²⁸⁰ Vinnen expressed both national and regional allegiance in his illustrated pamphlet on German natural history. The book was intended as an educational resource for children.²⁸¹ The author describes each animal that he follows with a folk tale. In his tale of the wolf, he describes how a father returns home to find his children have been attacked by a wolf on the outskirts of Worpswede. Vinnen describes how the avenging father made a trap in order to capture the animal and kill it. [Fig. 5]²⁸² The pamphlet endorses myth-making culture that prevailed in Germany during the nineteenth century.

²⁸⁰ Carl Vinnen, (ed.), *Ein Protest deutsche Künstler*, Jena, 1911, 1

²⁸¹ J. H. Fischbeck (Vinnen), *Naturgeschichte*, Leipzig, 1899, x

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 7.

The pamphlet was published under the pseudonym 'J. H. Fischbeck'. Vinnen published the pamphlet with a date that preceded the actual publication date by a hundred years, which is the obvious indication that the author wished others to perceive this as an old text. Lastly, the images in the pamphlet are markedly old-fashioned in style. Possible explanations for this stylistic approach are as follows: A pride in Germany's natural environment was more credible a hundred years previously when industry had not polluted so much of the countryside. His etchings of the animals, which adorn the pages of the educational book, are reminiscent of Dürer's woodcuts of animals. For Langbehn, Dürer's work was the epitome of what German art should be.²⁸³ The old fashioned style of Vinnen's pamphlet placed its images within a secure German framework. The pamphlet was published therefore with the intention that it be viewed as a work that was written a hundred years previously and thus the artist simply removed any possible direct comparison between these German sketches and the dominant French Impressionists.

This leads onto Vinnen's second publication *Ein Protest deutscher Künstler*. Vinnen's publication was a protest on behalf of German artists, sparked by a purchase of a painting by Van Gogh by the *Bremen Kunsthalle* for 40,000 Marks.²⁸⁴ This sum of money was not equalled by the sales of contemporary German painters. Around a hundred artists signed his remonstrance, including the aforementioned artist from the Dachau colony, Ludwig Dill, Vinnen's two Worpswede colleagues, Hans am Ende and Fritz Mackensen, and eminent artists

²⁸³ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 43.

²⁸⁴ Vinnen, (ed.), *Ein Protest deutscher Künstler*, 7.

such as Käthe Kollwitz and Franz von Stuck.²⁸⁵ Vinnen opened his tirade against French art with these words

Angesichts der großen Invasion französischer Kunst, die sich seit einigen Jahren in den sogenannten fortgeschrittenen deutschen Kunststreifen vollzieht, scheint es mir ein Gebot der Notwendigkeit zu sein, daß deutsche Künstler ihre wahrende Stimme erheben, und daß sie vor dem Einwande, sie triebe dazu nur der Neid, nicht zurückschrecken.²⁸⁶

For Vinnen the popularity of French art in Germany was nothing less than an invasion. He maintained that if German art was not valued in Germany it could not be prized elsewhere. Langbehn revered the Northern School over contemporary French and Italian art which he claimed was cold and brutal.²⁸⁷ Vinnen's defence of German art was only a step away from Langbehn's who openly criticised French and Italian art for what he saw as vulgar in nature and venerated the northern school for its depth and character.

Otto Modersohn disagreed with Vinnen's approach and believed that national interests should not influence the sales of German art. Personally, as well as professionally, Modersohn did not like Vinnen. In his diary he called him superficial and for him, Vinnen's work had nothing new to offer.²⁸⁸ Indeed, Vinnen was always on the periphery of the group. He came from a family much wealthier than any of the other Worpswede artists which meant that he never moved to Worpswede but stayed in his family's home, under Gustav Pauli's (director of the Bremen Kunsthalle) insistence he never became an official

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 18-20.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁸⁷ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 39-41.

²⁸⁸ Otto Modersohn's diary, 1894, Otto Modersohn Museum, 105.

member of the *Künstlervereinigung Worpswede*.²⁸⁹ Therefore, the artist did not latch onto the idea of expressing the identity of Worpswede wholeheartedly and his rhetoric was more nationalistic than any of the other founding members of the colony.

In 1911 Modersohn formalised his response to the *Protest* in a pamphlet coordinated by artists who took the opposite view. Modersohn argued that the sale of the Van Gogh could only serve to benefit German art. In response to Vinnen's protest Modersohn wrote:

Just as I was overjoyed about purchasing Van Gogh's Field of Poppies -one of the most exciting paintings in modern art - for the Bremer Kunsthalle, I will be happy about every good painting from abroad that finds a home in Germany, because it will be beneficial to German art, which is developing well at the present time. The funds used for this are insignificant, because they will bear a great deal of interest. The critique, which brings this work closer to an understanding among the public, fulfils a high mission. Nationality does not play any role whatsoever in art, all that matters is the quality of a piece of art. French art in many aspects deserves precedence because it is the art of a people that possesses a special talent for the visual arts and from which we Germans can learn a lot. And if art has elevated itself in our country in the past years, we primarily have to thank French art, which has become more and more known in Germany, for this.

²⁸⁹Almuth zu Jeddloh-Sayk, *Studien zu Leben und Werk von Carl Vinnen (1863-1922) Unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung des Protestes Deutscher Künstler*“ Bonn, 1986, 15.

We will be unable, for the time-being, to do without it. The down-to-earth nature of our art, if it is genuine, will not suffer as a result.²⁹⁰

In Modersohn's copy of the book *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (held at the Otto Modersohn Museum) the artist underlined the author's phrase 'Der rechte Künstler kann nicht lokal genug sein.'²⁹¹ Naturally, the phrase held significance for him. He was struck by Langbehn's focus on identity in a small locale. He also indicated that the individual character of the landscape was important to him since he underscored Langbehn's word *Individualismus* twice and highlighted the word in other passages as well.²⁹² Furthermore, he underscored the phrase: 'Individualism is at the root of all art; and as the Germans are without doubt the most idiosyncratic and headstrong of all peoples: they are too'²⁹³.

Both Fritz Stern²⁹⁴ and Nobumasa Kiyonaga have discussed what Langbehn meant by *individualismus*²⁹⁵. Stern argues that Rembrandt seemed to be a genius. To be a genius one had to critique society from the periphery and therefore be an individual. Kiyonaga described Langbehn's individualism as a

²⁹⁰ *Im Kampf um die Kunst, Die Antwort auf den 'Protest deutscher Künstler'* München, 1911, 62. (Wie ich mich über die Erwerbung der van Goghschen Mohnfelder für die Bremer Kunsthalle gefreut habe, als eines der anregendsten Bilder moderner Kunst, werde ich mich über jedes gute Bild fremder Herkunft freuen, das auf deutschem Boden seine Stätte findet, weil es die in guter Entwicklung befindliche deutsche Kunst befruchten wird. Die dafür aufgewandten Mittel sind unerhebliche, weil sie reichlich Zinsen tragen werden. Die Kritik, die dieses Werk dem Verständnis des Volkes näher bringt, erfüllt eine hohe Mission. Die Nationalität spielt bei der Kunst überhaupt keine Rolle, es kommt lediglich auf die Qualität der Kunst an. Der französischen Kunst gebührt in vieler Hinsicht der Vorrang als der ines besonders für die bildenden Künste hochbegabten Volkes, von der wir Deutschen viel lernen können. Wenn sich die Kunst bei uns in den letzten Jahren gehoben hat, so verdanken wir das in erster Linie der bei uns immer bekannter gewordenen guten französischen Kunst. Bis auf weiteres können wir diese noch nicht entbehren. Die Bodenständigkeit unserer Kunst wird, soweit sie echt ist, dadurch nicht leiden.)

²⁹¹ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 15, see Modersohn's copy of *Rembrandt als Erzieher* is held on display in the cabinet in the Otto Modersohn Museum, Fischerhude.

²⁹² Otto Modersohn's copy of *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, Otto Modersohn Museum, Fischerhude, 9, 11, 12.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁹⁴ Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, 170.

²⁹⁵ Nobumasa Kiyonaga, *Alfred Lichtwark Kunsterziehung als Kulturpolitik*, München, 2008.

celebration of the divergent regional identities in Germany, which culminated in a national character.²⁹⁶

The contention here is that, in terms of art, *Individualismus* meant something slightly different for Langbehn. He believed that German art was inherently different from the mainstream art scene, which was dominated at the time by that from the south of Europe. Langbehn considered Italian and French art to be too frivolous or too realist. German artists, were encouraged by Langbehn to be more spiritual and serious²⁹⁷ in order to set themselves apart nationally through culture. Furthermore, the author's belief in the importance of reflecting the difference of German art was also due to the very nature of the German socio-political climate. German identity was polemic. Its diverse landscapes and cultures of the divergent *länder* meant, for Langbehn, the beauty of German art was in its distinct identities or *Individualismus* and artists were in prime position to express this. He wrote that German artists should base themselves in German villages because that was the best place from which to depict their national identity.²⁹⁸

Modersohn took Langbehn's views on wholeheartedly, as can be seen by his underscores and comments in his copy of the book. In the following quote from his diary Modersohn's interpretation of how exactly the artist could implement his *Individualismus* becomes more apparent. Modersohn echoes Langbehn's

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 155.

²⁹⁷ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 42-44

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

sentiment here about the importance of using colours which best represent the area.

My senses are interested only in the allure in nature provided by form and colour; I am not interested in nature as understood by the naturalists. Where colour first shows itself, whether in the local colour tones in detail, whether in the clouds in the sky, - that is where nature exists for me as an artist, for the paintbrush. The picture should be rich, interesting and filled with this gesture. The form comes into the picture in its original diversity, in its interesting alternation. This is something I have sensed for a long time, it is now how I think with all my heart, this is the ground upon which I firmly stand.

And then dreaming, losing oneself in one's imagination, in this sense fabricating, not only painting local motifs, the moor and the village, no, everything, everything, that is where the excitement must lie, emotional excitement, ideal content, that is connected to, is supported by the first - both must harmonise. And thus comes into being a uniform, unique, personal work of art. For me, it is the personality, the soul that is most important.²⁹⁹

This excerpt from the artist's diary is particularly evocative of a passage which Langbehn wrote about the importance of using *Lokaltöne* (sic.), or colours which

²⁹⁹ Otto Modersohn's diary, *Otto Modersohn Museum*, Fischerhude, 1894, 92. (Auf Reiz in der Natur in Form u. Farbe ist allein Sinn gerichtet; die Natur im Sinne d. Naturalisten ist mir ganz gleich. Wo sich Farbe zeigt (!) zunächst, sei es in den Lokaltönen i. einzelnen, sei es in Wolken a. Himmel, -da ist für mich die Natur für den Maler, für d. Pinsel. Das Bild sei reich, interessant, erfüllt von dieser Geste. Die Form tritt hinzu, in ihrer originellen Mannigfaltigkeit, ihrem interessanten Wechsel. So ahnte ich lange, so denke ich jetzt voll u. ganz, voll u. ganz stehe ich auf diesem Boden. Und dann träumen, phantasieren, in diesem Sinne erfinden, nicht nur Lokalmalen nur Moor u. Dorf, nein alles, alles, auch darin muß ein Reiz liegen, seelischer Reiz, ideeller Gehalt, der sich verbindet, unterstützt wird durch das erste, beides muß harmonieren. So entsteht ein einheitliches, eigenartiges, persönliches Kunstwerk. Auf die Persönlichkeit kommt es mir zumeist an, auf die Seele.

were endemic to an area, in order to best portray that landscape. The author wrote

In that Rembrandt draws reference, strangely enough or perhaps not strangely at all, to the Greeks; many gentle nuances, merged into a smooth, bright and fine local tone are what still give the Greek landscape its uniform character today.³⁰⁰

Modersohn's interpretation of Langbehn's theory of the *Lokalton* is probably best reflected in his autumnal scenes, which he painted at the height of his career in the late 1890s. In his painting *Herbst im Moor* of 1895 Modersohn depicts the softness of the northern light which bathes the scene in a warm orange glow [Fig. 6]. The colours of the foliage on the trees, from the grasses in the field, to the straw on the roofs of the huts, are all shades of oranges and browns. These colours obviously do not offer a true depiction of the colours in Worpswede in the photographic sense. They do, however, reflect how the artist was undertaking Langbehn's premise that each region had its own particular colours which could assist an artist in defining and identifying the area. In the above quote from Modersohn's diary he also wrote that, when he painted, he felt that he fully stood on that soil. The act of painting the Lower Saxon countryside then, he believed, informed his understanding and appreciation of that particular environment.

³⁰⁰ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 42. (Darin berührt sich Rembrandt, seltsamer oder nicht seltsamer Weise, mit den Griechen; viele leise Nuancen, zum gleichmäßigen lichten feinen Lokalton verschmolzen, geben der griechischen Landschaft noch heute ihren einheitlichen Charakter.)

This resonates with a passage in *Rembrandt als Erzieher* when the author praised his Netherlands master for never having left the country in which he was born, he wrote 'er ist dem Boden treu geblieben, dem er entstammt; er malt holländisch.'³⁰¹ Where Langbehn's words confirm a pride in Rembrandt's sense of loyalty to his country, however, Modersohn interpreted a sense of compassion with his locale through painting. In the following phrase from the artist's diary, he again wrote that he wanted to portray a distinctiveness of the landscape. He wished to paint not only the particularities of the moor and the village but also the charm and the unique character in his art work. By doing this, the artist takes a big departure from Mackensen and Overbeck. Modersohn aspires to paint, not exactly what he sees in the Worpswede landscape, but his impression of it. In his diary, Modersohn twice quoted the same phrase from Langbehn's book: 'Eigenart, welche die Welt widerspiegelt ist Kunst.'³⁰²

Modersohn espoused two of Langbehn's themes: a desire for an individual art form and an art which reflected the characteristics of the rural locale which he believed best portrayed its regional identity. Modersohn drew on the early years of the colony retrospectively when he wrote in his memoirs:

Over time, Worpswede had grown on us so much without us even realising it, that a separation was almost unthinkable. As I spoke this liberating word, the reaction was naturally one of great joy.³⁰³

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

³⁰² Otto Modersohn's diary, 1895, 112 and 1895, 134.

³⁰³ Otto Modersohn's diary, 24/08/1889. Worpswede war uns in der Zeit, ohne daß wir es eigentlich wußten, so nahegerückt, daß eine Trennung fast unmöglich war. Über dieses erlösende Wort, (das ich sprach) war natürlich große Freude.

Modersohn's audacious claim 'We were Worpswede', closely associates with Langbehn's ideal that artists should paint in a style which most reflected the province they were living in.³⁰⁴ Notably, Modersohn does not use the name of the province but the name of the village with which to associate himself, invoking Langbehn's sentiment: he could not be local enough. Modersohn's claim had less to do with living in the lineage of Rembrandt, as in the case of Mackensen's interpretation, which will be analysed next.

Mackensen led the way in relocating to the village after staying with friends there.³⁰⁵ He argued that Langbehn's ideology inadvertently coincided specifically with the artists' move to the North-West of Germany. In his book, Langbehn had idealized the peasants of the region, claiming them as the oldest and most noble Germans; expressly he called them 'the only surviving old Germans.'³⁰⁶ He maintained that the customs and dialect had remained unchanged in the villages of the North-West despite the rapid decline of the rest of society. The indication that the moor colonists were one of the poorest sections of society³⁰⁷ comes as no surprise then since the author had idealised its lack of industrialisation. Langbehn chose them as a collective symbol of traditional German values since for him they represented a contrast to what he saw as a fractured modern Germany. It is argued here that this coincidence only further stimulated the relevance of Langbehn book for the Worpsweders.

³⁰⁴ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 19.

³⁰⁵ Modersohn, *Otto Modersohn Leben und Werk*, 25.

³⁰⁶ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 125.

³⁰⁷ D. Blackburn, *The Conquest of Nature*, London, 2006, 150

Mackensen revealed in a speech, published in his memoirs,

We read Langbehn's book "Rembrandt as an Educator" unable to put it down. We revelled in the idea that Rembrandt was born and lived on the same geographic line on which Worpswede is located.³⁰⁸

Mackensen reveals here that the fact that Rembrandt was from northern Europe was of the utmost significance to him. He considered himself closer to the Dutch master because he was working in Lower Saxony. Mackensen suggests then, that it was Rembrandt's environment rather than his personally acquired artistic skills which enabled him to reach his revered status. In this same sense then, Mackensen implies that all the Worpswede artists were influenced by the northern landscape.

The serious and spiritual effect of the northern environment as defined by Langbehn seems nowhere more obvious in Mackensen's work than in *Gottesdienst im Freien* of 1895 [Fig. 7] where the austere landscape seems to have lulled the congregation into somber reflection. In reality, Mackensen did not spend all his time in Worpswede soaking up the grave atmosphere of Lower Saxony but instead travelled extensively throughout Germany and worked as a Professor at the Weimar Art Academy from 1908. In 1910 he became the director of the Academy.³⁰⁹ However, he promoted himself to an audience through Langbehn's tenet; if Rembrandt's work was the epitome of northern art, by living in Worpswede, Mackensen's art followed in the footsteps of the northern master.

³⁰⁸ Fritz Mackensen, 1938, 'Das Erste Weltdorf' speech on the 1st Niedersachsen Painters Day. Langbehns Buch ›Rembrandt als Erzieher‹ haben wir sozusagen verschlungen. Wir lebten in dem Gedanken, daß Rembrandt auf der selben geographischen Linie geboren ist und gelebt hat, auf der Worpswede liegt.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁹ Boulboulle and Zeiss, *Worpswede*, 58

Fritz Overbeck highlighted several issues to Macksensen when he twice mentioned the book *Rembrandt als Erzieher* in his essay published in *Kunst für Alle*. He advocated two of Langbehn's contentions: the village's unique character and its poverty. Firstly, Overbeck quotes a passage from the Rilke monograph which he states was influenced by the book *Rembrandt als Erzieher*; indeed it was a reference to Langbehn who wrote 'wer hieß jemals Rembrandt, außer Rembrandt selbst?'³¹⁰ Rilke paraphrased Langbehn in his monograph and was quoted by Overbeck in his article which suggested that Worpswede was unique in the way that Rembrandt was.

A strange name 'Worpswede'! No other human being is called 'Rembrandt' apart from Rembrandt, no other place is called 'Worpswede' apart from Worpswede. The unique character of the countryside there is succinctly expressed in these three syllables.³¹¹

Overbeck goes on to discuss the uniqueness (*Eigenart*) of Worpswede, in much the same way as Modersohn did.³¹² As previously mentioned, uniqueness, or what Langbehn called *Individualismus*, was a characteristic which the author considered to be one of the most important aspects of the German character and that this should be reflected in its art.³¹³ On the subject of the German people Langbehn wrote:

Its disposition for individuality, to follow its own head, in brief, the literal and politically so often disadvantageous disunity among the German

³¹⁰ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 12

³¹¹ Fritz Overbeck 'Ein Brief aus Worpswede' in *Kunst für Alle*, 1895/6, 'Seltsamer Name, 'Worpswede!' Kein Mensch heißt (sic.) Rembrandt außer Rembrandt, kein Ort heißt 'Worpswede' außer Worpswede. Im Klange dieser drei Silben ist prägnant der eigenartige Charakter des Landes ausgedrückt.

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 3

people has allowed it, in particular, to go further in the artistic and intellectual field than any other people.³¹⁴

Langbehn contends that Germans by nature are independent thinkers and therefore they needed an art form which reflected their individual character.

In his second contention of Langbehn, Overbeck continued to extol Langbehn's interpretation of Rembrandt in a different passage of the same article. Overbeck idealized the poverty of rural Worpswede as an artistic asset and favorably compares this with Rembrandt's depictions of the poor.

A simple cottage might be so poor and yet rich in treasures for a painter. Rembrandt would have had his mystical light/dark here, twice as mystical when a lost ray of sunlight finds its way through a crack in the roof, or through the greenish panes of the small windows into the room filled with the blue smoke from the peat fire.³¹⁵

Similarly, Langbehn wrote that Christ and Rembrandt had poverty in common, a concept the author greatly revered. As with Langbehn, Overbeck was unconcerned with social questions surrounding rural poverty. Overbeck describes the poverty stricken, poorly ventilated moor colonists' dwellings as an artistic treasure. Furthermore, Langbehn wrote on the artistic charm of hardship in the following passage.

Christ himself and Rembrandt have something internally and fundamentally in common, that is, the one brought the religious, the other

³¹⁴ Langbehn *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 3 Seine Neigung, individuell zu sein, dem eigenen Kopfe zu folgen, kurz die sprichwörtliche und politisch so oft nachtheilig gewesene deutsche Uneinigkeit befähigt ihn ganz besonders, es auf künstlerisch-geistigem Gebiet weiter zu bringen als andere Völker.

³¹⁵ F. Overbeck, *Ein Brief aus Worpswede* in 'Kunst für Alle, 1895/6. Doch ob die Hütte noch so arm ist, ist sie doch reich an malerischen Schätzen. Hier hätte Rembrandt sein mystisches Helldunkel gefunden, doppelt geheimnisvoll, wenn ein verirrter Sonnenstrahl durch eine Dachspalte oder die grünlichen Scheiben der Fensterchen (sic.) in den vom blauen Rauche des Torffeuers erfüllten Raum fällt.

the artistic destitution - the destitution of the poor - to deserved dignity.³¹⁶

Langbehn saw Rembrandt's work as an antidote to the materialistic culture of modern Germany. Overbeck drew on Langbehn again when he praised Rembrandt's dark colours as melancholic. Overbeck goes on to expound another of Langbehn's theories when he praised the Worpswede landscape as *serious*.³¹⁷ The artist therefore infers that the landscape paintings were some sort of remedy for the frivolous and superficial culture that Langbehn also maintained was the beauty of the effect of Rembrandt's work.³¹⁸

Vogeler took Langbehn's critique of modern society and tried to implement social change in Worpswede; A closer examination of which will follow in a section on the commercialization of Worpswede, where Vogeler's alternative approach to the colony of artists will be discussed in depth. Vogeler's letters and diaries reveal that he was more pragmatic than his colleagues. The artist wrote to notable art collectors, art critics and fellow artists to raise the colony's profile.³¹⁹ He helped establish a journal for the province, called *Niedersachsen*, which raised awareness about the province. This assisted in creating an identity what the magazine found to be a traditional farming community for the district.³²⁰ He designed a set of train stations that went from Bremen to Worpswede and its neighbouring villages in order to bring an art buying public

³¹⁶ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 25. Christus selbst und Rembrandt haben innerlich und grundsätzlich darin etwas Gemeinsames, daß Jener religiöse, dieser die künstlerische Armseligkeit – die Seligkeit der Armen – zu verdienten Ehren bringt.

³¹⁷ Fritz Overbeck, *Kunst für Alle*, 'Ein Brief aus Worpswede,' 1895/6 reprinted in Kreul (ed.) *Rilke. Worpswede*. Bremen, 2003, 215.

³¹⁸ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 37.

³¹⁹ See Letter from H. Vogeler to H. Bethge 1906, Barkenhoff Worpswede Stiftung, and Letter from H. Vogeler to W. Heymel, 1904, Barkenhoff Worpswede Stiftung.

³²⁰ *Niedersachsen*, No. 1, Vol., 1895, Bremen

into Worpswede in their droves.³²¹ Vogeler was instrumental in the implementation of a Building Commission where he and his colleagues physically developed a sense of identity for the village.³²²

To summarise, the book implied a celebration of German art and a rejection of southern artistic influences for Vinnen. For Mackensen the important issue was that he was living in a similar geographical location to Rembrandt himself. Overbeck embraced Langbehn's idealisation of poverty in the countryside as the perfect antidote to the materialism of modern culture. Modersohn considered himself and his colleagues to have appreciated his locale, as Langbehn had suggested was important for northern artists. Vogeler's actions in Worpswede imply that the artist was stirred by Langbehn's nihilistic view of modern society to endeavour to change it for the better. While all the artists in the group were inspired by Langbehn's book, different aspects of it influenced their work and artistic practices as will be shown below.

(iv) The reception of the Worpsweders work at the Munich *Glaspalast* in 1895 on Langbehn's terms

All of the recent Worpswede literature agrees that the *Glaspalast* exhibition of 1895 was the breakthrough that the artists had been waiting for. However, Schütze's book *Der Durchbruch*, is the only text to consider what was said by the media, yet the author does not analyse how the columnists interpreted the artists' work. Schütze explains that the press praised the artists since they were

³²¹ Boulboulle and Zeiss, *Worpswede*, 94

³²² *Architektonische Rundschau*, Vereins für niedersächsisches Volkstum, No. 26, Vol. 9, 1910 (pages not numbered)

almost pressured into celebrating the exhibition as a condemnation of the Secessionists exhibition, which had run concurrently.³²³ This theory will be challenged here. It will be shown that the critics interpreted the artists' work as a manifestation of the Langbehn book, and that critics and the public alike had keenly anticipated such art. Given the popularity of the book, it can be broadly assumed that most of the critics were familiar with the text. . It is suggested that the critics knew of the Langbehn book because they used his linguistic terms to explain the artists' work. Columnists used Langbehn's concepts on regional identity in landscape painting and the pious and pure country folk, in order to rationalise their work. They claimed that the Worpsweders work was the German national art form Langbehn had craved

Schütze mentions that the artists were successful in the way that Langbehn would have wanted. He observes that the Worpsweders gave Germany an art form of their own which they could celebrate.³²⁴ Schütze does not explain, however, what he meant by defining the Worpsweders' artwork as German in style. He does not say why a German national art was important at this time, except that this was the German answer to the success of the French Impressionists.³²⁵ This present thesis uses Schütze's excellent primary source material but aims to deepen the explanation as to why the exhibition was so successful. As previous examinations of the Worpsweders have been scrutinized here, the Langbehn text will be heavily relied upon to explain the success of the

³²³ Schütze, *Der Durchbruch*, 64

³²⁴ Schütze, *Der Durchbruch*, 62.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

artists' work at the exhibition. Even if the critics were not familiar with *Rembrandt als Erzieher* they still shared concepts about regional identity in art.

The art-going public were keen to discover a new 'German' art through Langbehn's vision. An admiration of Dutch art was keenly felt at the *Glaspalast* around 1900. As one anonymous art critic of the contemporary art exhibition wrote three years previously, 'here are some landscapes and interiors by German masters, which, if placed among the Dutch entries, would not disturb their unity.'³²⁶ The author notes the similarities between Dutch and German painting, foreshadowing Langbehn's insistence that Rembrandt had the qualities of a German artist³²⁷. The Worpswede's success owed much to the Dutch. The flatness of the landscape, the windmills and the wide horizons allowed a visual comparison for Dutch art and the Worpswede paintings. Such a comparison with a country, whose nationalist identity was so compelling, must have served to strengthen the cause of the Worpsweders.

In an article from the *Hannover Courier*, republished in the regional paper the *Wümme Zeitung*, the columnist observed that the Worpswede artists had come from nowhere and had phenomenal success. Specifically, the columnist wrote,

The success achieved by the painters of Worpswede at the annual exhibition in the Munich Glass Palace today is unparalleled in the recent history of art. A few young people turned up, whose names nobody knows, from a place whose name nobody knows, and they were not only given one of the best halls, but one of them was even awarded the great

³²⁶ *The Hague School*, London, 1983, 189

³²⁷ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 8-9

gold medal and the Pinakothek bought a picture from one of the others. For he who somehow knows that an artist can otherwise only achieve such honours after striving towards them for many years and by having good connections, these happenings are a fantastic thing that he would not believe unless he had seen it with his own eyes. Never has the truth been so improbable.³²⁸

The columnist writes that the success of the artists' work was almost unbelievable from an artist who was not yet established. Thus, affirming the academic elitism which Langbehn complained of in the German art world; which made it difficult for new artists' work to be recognized.

Another journalist maintained that the landscape itself had a powerful effect on the artists. What follows is the journalist's romantic description of the Worpswede landscape; the journalist maintained the natural beauty of the countryside drew the artists to the village.

Worpswede near Bremen is where they live during the summer, like peasants in peasant houses; (...) they come together from east and west, north and south, by night and in fog. They are called Fritz Mackensen, Otto Modersohn, Fritz Overbeck and Heinrich Vogeler; and the etcher Hans am Ende. They love to pursue the dark secrets of the moor, the brownish-black soil through which the canal crudely flows, the brooding shadowy bodies of well-nourished copses, the morose colours of autumn

³²⁸ *Hannover Courier* Republished in ,*Wümme Zeitung*', 'Die Maler von Worpswede' 17 Jahrgang, nr. 127, 26.10.1895. (Der Erfolg, den die Maler von Worpswede auf der heutigen Jahresausstellung im Münchner Glaspalast errangen, hat in der Geschichte der neueren Kunst nicht seinesgleichen. Kommen da ein paar junge Leute daher, deren Namen niemand kennt, aus einem Ort, dessen Namen Niemand kennt, und man giebt ihnen nicht blos einen der besten Säle, sondern der eine erhält die große goldene Medaille und dem andern kauft die neue Pinakothek ein Bild ab. Für den, der irgend weiß, wie ein Künstler zu solchen Ehren sonst nur durch langjähriges Streben und gute Verbindungen kommen kann, ist das eine so fabelhafte Sache, daß er sie nicht glauben würde, hätte er sie nicht selbst erlebt. Niemals ist eine Wahrheit so unwahrscheinlich gewesen.)

in the surly sunshine. All of this is spooky, eerie, even in daylight, a theme that is always present throughout this cheerless marshland. And there is a great deal of it, with a few strong characteristics, with unpleasant truth. This artistic conspiracy is now the newest in a world of paintings and it is something that will be talked a lot about.³²⁹

One of the reviewers praised Vogeler for his 'anmutige Befähigung, im primitiven Stile figürliche Märchenmotive auszuarbeiten'. He also commended Mackensen 'der namentliche in seinen evangelischen Gottesdienst im Freien zwar keine auffällig originnelle Persönlichkeit bietet, aber doch durch tiefe Charakteristik schön wirkt.'³³⁰ This author showed that the Worpsweders' work had depth and meaning. The slow spiritual decay, which Langbehn claimed was the hallmark of modern society, was combated in the group's work. In his following passage he makes a comparison with Böcklin, which is seen as significant since he was considered by Langbehn to offer a different style to his French contemporaries and is thus a typically northern artist.³³¹

Another author recognizes the German character of the Worpsweders' work and makes a comparison with The Glasgow Boys. The two groups bore an obvious likeness in their promotion of their association with a northern location. Visually they shared a naturalistic style:

³²⁹ 25.09.1895, from a group of reviews at the Otto Modersohn Museum stored under the title 'Archiv Presse 1, Glaspalast München 1895' with no title or further reference. (In Worpswede bei Bremen hausen sie, den Sommer über, wie Bauern in Bauernhäusern; (...) kommen sie dort aus Ost und West, Nord und Süd bei Nacht und Nebel zusammen. Sie heißen Fritz Mackensen, Otto Modersohn, Fritz Overbeck, und Heinrich Vogeler; dazu kommt noch der Radierer Hans am Ende. Den dunklen Geheimnissen des Moorlandes gehen sie mit Vorliebe nach, der schwarzbraunen Bodentrume (sic.), die der Kanal grell (sic.) durchfließt, den brütenden Schattenmassen wohlgenährter Haine, den mürrischen Herbstfarben im unwirschen Sonnenschein. All das ist selbst bei Tage gespenstisch, unheimlich, es geht fortwähren um in diesem düsteren Marschland. Und gegeben wird es in großen Massen, mit wenigen starken Zügen, mit unangenehmer Wahrheit. Diese malerische Verschwörung ist jetzt das Neuste in der Bilderwelt und wird noch von sich reden machen.)

³³⁰ Wilhelm Schölermann, *Die Münchner Jahresausstellung im Glaspalast in Kunstchronik*, 25 July 1895, NF 6, 1894-1895, nr. 31, 483.

³³¹ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 13

This is how you are allowed to feel with Modersohn: cheery, powerful, honest, German. And because out of him speaks a nature which, even if only in a very detailed way, expresses itself personally again and again, and is not a work cleverly directed at forcing oneself to produce a masterpiece; therefore that is why we prefer him – the Worpswede boy – to elegant flock of the Boys of Glasgow.³³²

The author of this piece in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* claims Modersohn's work as honest and strong and therefore German. The painting to which this author refers is *Sturm im Teufelsmoor*, its 'honesty' is cited here as accountable to its German character. This was precisely what Langbehn had anticipated, an art form which was recognizably from a specific area in Germany. Fritz von Ostini from the *Neueste Nachrichten* picked up on similar themes of northern identity when he wrote the following.

There (in Worpswede), a circle of young painters has come together whose art draws its power and its aroma from the soil of its home region like no other. (...) And the smell of soil drifts out to us from the paintings of Modersohn and Overbeck. (...) And how his (Karl Haider's) art is like his (Otto Modersohn's) - German in every fibre. This is certainly also true of the other Worpswede painters - and that is what we must credit them most with, that is what sets them apart from many another painter who

³³² *Frankfurter am Main*, 30.8.1895, (from a file of a collection of newspaper cuttings in the file *Glaspalast* at the Modersohn archive), Fischerhude. (So läßt sich bei Modersohn fühlen: heiter, kräftig, ehrlich, deutsch. Und weil aus ihm eine Natur spricht, die, wenn auch im ganz Beschränkten, sich stets auf's Neue persönlich äußert, und keine auf ein endlich erzwungenes Meisterstück eingefuchste Macherschaft, darum soll er – der Worpsweder Junge – uns lieber sein, als die frisierte Schar der Boys of Glasgow.)

may do more and who creates with more ease, more quickly and more brilliantly.³³³

Ostini fervently declared that the artists were drawn to the soil of their homeland. The author is eager to claim Modersohn's work as German to the core. Langbehn's words are echoed here when the author uses the word *genius*, Langbehn had claimed that the problem with German art was that all its geniuses were dead. This critic then places the Worpswede artists amongst Germany's dead icons which Langbehn claimed as geniuses like Schiller and Goethe.³³⁴ The following journalist was equally keen to praise the exhibition and bestows a motto upon the work of the Worpsweders describing them as both individual and national.

And just as the Worpsweder themselves are full of the joy of discovery, their pictures appear to us like new discoveries. [...] Otto Modersohn is the most original among them. [...] Modersohn was therefore deservedly rewarded in that the Bavarian state bought his largest picture 'Storm in the Devil's Moor' for the Pinakothek. The award of first medal went to Fritz Mackensen for his large picture 'Worship'. [...] All in all, this Munich exhibition deserves as its motto, the axiom: 'Emulation makes every art barren, only the individual and national truth in art is constant and can survive the spirit of its own times'.³³⁵

³³³Fritz von Ostini, *Neueste Nachrichten*, 'Die Münchener Jahresausstellung im Glaspalast in München', 8.1895. (Dort (in Worpswede) hat sich ein Kreis junger Maler zusammengefunden, deren Kunst ihre Kraft und ihren Duft so ausschließlich aus der heimatlichen Scholle zieht, wie nicht leicht eine andere. (...) Und Erdgeruch weht uns auch aus den Bildern von Modersohn und Overbeck entgegen. (...) Und wie dessen (Karl Haiders) Kunst ist die seinige (Otto Modersohns) in allen Fibern deutsch. Die der anderen Worpsweder freilich auch – und das sei ihnen am Höchsten angerechnet, das hebt sich hoch hinaus über manchen Andern, der schon mehr kann und leichter, flotter, genialer schafft.)

³³⁴ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 1890, 8.

³³⁵ 'Die Münchner Kunstausstellungen IV' in *Kreuzzeitung* Berlin, 1895 (from a collection of cut out articles in a folder titled *Worpswede*) Otto Modersohn archive.

The journalists of the exhibition were keen to claim Worpswede as a unique artistic treasure and their painting was nothing less than an expression of love for their homeland. This is just as Langbehn would have wanted.³³⁶

Another columnist in the *Kreuz Zeitung* directly connected the artists to the *Heimat* movement, which the previous journalist only alluded to. He wrote that the artists painted the countryside with the love of a poet.³³⁷ Langbehn also compared Rembrandt to a poet.³³⁸ The columnist continued 'und man erkennt auch bald, daß sie jede Einzelheit, jede Nüance (sic) und jede Form in diesen Landschaften lieben, wie man die Heimath (sic) liebt. Darin liegt das Geheimnis ihres Erfolges.'³³⁹ He argues that the success of the artists' work really lay in their love of their homeland. This reinforces Langbehn's sentiment about Rembrandt whose success he believed lay in his connection to his country. Langbehn emphasised that the German artists be inspired by Rembrandt's provincial nature.³⁴⁰

Regional and national themes are continued in another article which covered the exhibition. The journalist calls the artist's work a description of *local-patriotismus*.³⁴¹ This is reminiscent of Langbehn's theory that each German artist should depict the core of the identity of their region.³⁴² The author continues to

³³⁶ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 15-16. (Und so wie die Worpsweder selbst voll Entdeckungseifer sind, so muthen auch uns ihre Bilder wie neue Entdeckungen an. [...] Otto Modersohn ist der originellste von ihnen. [...] Modersohn ist dadurch nach Verdienst ausgezeichnet worden, daß der bairische Statt sein größtes Gemälde ‚Sturm im Teufelsmoor‘ für die Pinakothek angekauft hat. Die Auszeichnung der ersten Medaille ist Fritz Mackensen zu Theil (sic.) geworden für sein großes Gemälde ‚Gottesdienst‘. [...] Alles in allem, diese Münchner Ausstellung verdient als Motto das Axiom: ‚Nachahmung macht jede Kunst unfruchtbar, nur das individuell und national Aechte in der Kunst hat Bestand und überlebt den Geist der eigenen Zeit.)

³³⁷ *Kreuz Zeitung*, 31.08.1895, Otto Modersohn Museum

³³⁸ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 31.

³³⁹ *Kreuz Zeitung*, 31. 08.1895, Otto Modersohn Museum

³⁴⁰ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 15.

³⁴¹ *Bremen Tagesblatt*, Aus der Kunsthalle, Bremen, 11.04.1895, Article from the OMM, in a box on the Glaspalast exhibition.

³⁴² Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 15-16.

claim that Mackensen's painting of a mission service could only have come from a German since it holds the emotional depth which is only conceivable from the Germans.³⁴³ The journalist, Ernst Neuling, wrote

Where Mackensen stays true to himself, he is full of powerful idiosyncrasy. As such, his hand drawings and his 'Worship' are absolutely consummate. It would unjustifiably be termed as complaining, if one would point out this or that piece on the large canvas with a critical grimace, which does not appear to do justice to the true-to-lifeness of his figures. Only German depth of feeling could dare such a theme. Today, the Spanish and the French, not to mention the Italians, would not have portrayed the effect a sermon had on those seated listening to it and, if they had done so, they would not have achieved such spiritual concentration.³⁴⁴

The columnist's criticism of the French and Italians, who he implied have a superficial culture in comparison to German art is reminiscent of Langbehn's critique of Zola's realism in which he condemned French and Italian painting as being frivolous in comparison to the more profound German works of art.³⁴⁵

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁴ Ernst Neuling 'Aus der Kunsthalle', Bremen, 11.04.1895, (from a collection of cuttings of articles in a folder *Glaspalast*) Otto Modersohn Museum, Fischerhude. (Wo Mackensen sich selbst giebt, ist er voll kräftiger Eigenart. So sind die Handzeichnungen und so ist sein "Gottesdienst" im hohen (sic.) Maße vollendet. Es hieße ungerechter Weise nörgeln, wollte man mit kritischer Grimasse auf diese oder jene Stelle der großen Leinwand zeigen, die nicht jedem gleich zu Dank gemacht erscheint, gegenüber allein schon der Lebenswahrheit seiner Figuren. Nur deutsche Gemütstiefe durfte sich an ein solches Thema wagen. Heutige Spanier und Franzosen, von Italienern ganz zu schweigen würden sich an die Darstellung der Wirkung einer Predigt auf eine meist sitzende Gesellschaft nicht gemacht haben, und wenn sie es gethan, würden sie eine solche geistige Concentration nicht erreicht haben.)

³⁴⁵ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 44-46.

In an article in the *Kölnische Zeitung* yet another journalist picked up on the same themes claiming the Worpswede artists' artwork as full of character.³⁴⁶ The columnist wrote

The artists who live there are interesting in any case; they show themselves to be withdrawn in silent thought, appear somewhat alien, and yet certainly not out of a fashionable addiction to be original, but rather with a truly and honestly seeking sentiment.³⁴⁷

The words *ehrlich*, *wahrhaft* and *ernsthaft* are repeated all through these articles, closely mirroring Langbehn. For the audience, what was deep, true and genuine about the Worpswede artists was that they were portraying a real place with genuine character. Whether or not this character was embellished, created or genuine, the critics applauded the artists' depictions of Worpswede. It was something they could celebrate as a true representation of local identity.

A small scale Worpswede artist called Hans Müller Brauel, published an article about the *Glaspalast* exhibition. The artist explains the success of the artists' work at the *Glaspalast* through a philosophy, which anticipated Adolf Bartels' essay *Heimatkunst*.³⁴⁸ Brauel argued that the artists felt a genuine sense of love for their *Heimat*, which was conveyed in their work. He wrote:

One could see it, these people created out of endless love for the soil they lived on and this love made them strong in their creation. In their pictures, one could feel with the creators that they had first of all stood before nature in wonder, in awe, but had then attempted to recreate what

³⁴⁶ *Kölnische Zeitung*, 5.07.1895, Otto Modsohn Museum in the folder titled *Glaspalast*, no further ref, Fischerhude.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.* (Es sind jedenfalls interessante Künstler, die da zurückgezogen in einem stillen Erdenkeiten zeigen, fremdartig wirken, aber doch ohne Zweifel nicht aus einer modischen Originalitätssucht heraus, sondern mit einer wahrhaftigen, ehrlich suchenden Empfindung arbeiten.)

³⁴⁸ A. Bartels, *Heimatkunst: Ein Wort zur Verständigung*, Heft 8, München and Leipzig, 1904.

they saw, if possible, as they saw it, first of all it did not matter how it turned technically, -- it was not a routine that moved their paintbrush, it was far more a painstaking search for a form of expression. But it was all truly German and came from their very essence.³⁴⁹

Brauel then develops Langbehn's ideas about German art. Where Langbehn was keen to have a culture, which, to him, represented the German characteristics of seriousness, deep thought and truth, Brauel shifts the emphasis towards a *Heimat* culture. Unlike the aforementioned columnists, for Brauel, it was not so much the expression of regional identity that was important but the expression of the love of the homeland.

(v) The two most highly acclaimed paintings exhibited at the 1895 *Glaspalast Gottesdienst unter Freiem Himmel* and *Sturm im Teufelsmoor*

The Worpswede art-work at the *Glaspalast* exhibition was described, with the shared ideas about regionalism in German painting from Langbehn's philosophy. The two most significant works exhibited at the *Glaspalast* will be analysed here.

Mackensen's outdoor church service won the gold medal for painting, while Modersohn's image of storm in the moors was bought by the *Neue Pinakothek*. Mackensen's image of sombre Protestant villagers at a missionary service conducted outdoors, surrounded by willowy birches with squat, meagre cottages in the background won the gold medal at the 1895 *Glaspalast* exhibition [Fig. 7].

³⁴⁹Hans Müller Brauel, 'Worpswede und die Worpsweder', *Die Kunst unserer Zeit*, München, VII, Heft II, 1896 (Man sah es, diese Leute hatten geschafft aus unendlicher Liebe zu dem Fleck Erde, wo sie weilten, diese Liebe hatte sie in ihrem Schaffen stark gemacht. Man fühlte es an den Bildern ihren Schöpfern nach, diese Leute hatten zuerst bewundernd, anbetend vor der Natur gestanden, dann aber versucht, das Geschaute nachzubilden, möglich (sic.) so, wie sie es geschaut, zunächst einerlei, wie es technisch wurde, -- irgend welche Routine führte ihnen nicht den Pinsel, es war vielmehr oft ein mühsames Suchen nach der Ausdrucksweise. Aber alles war echt deutsch und gegeben aus eigenem Wesen heraus.)

The painting clearly answered Langbehn's call for painting which was Protestant, melancholy, idiosyncratic and, most crucially, pictured the rural poor at their most humble and pious. Mackensen's own thoughts of the people at the outdoor service are outlined in a letter he wrote to Modersohn below:

It really is splendid to see the people in this way; but now imagine these interesting people at a missionary meeting, deeply devote under the open sky. This morning we drove by carriage to a nearby village and listened to four preachers until six in the evening. That means, I sketched these devote people during the sermons. I am in bliss at the thought of being able to paint a picture of this at a later date.³⁵⁰

Mackensen's devout and somber villagers were the antidote to the influence of the so called 'morally corruptive' cities. The artist reports that, on Sundays, the villagers listened to different preachers throughout the day until the early evening. In his last line he mentions that after the sermon he began to work on his painting while still in the serious frame of mind which the sermon left him with. At seven meters high, a size normally reserved for history painting, Mackensen painted the whole picture on an easel propped up against a church wall because his studio was not tall enough to house his work.³⁵¹ In this way, the artist elevated the ordinary folk of Lower Saxony to epic magnitude. The painting was not the spontaneous creation that Mackensen describes above in his diary, however. It took him almost a year with various different sketches until its completion.³⁵² The preacher depicted in the painting has his hands clasped, in

³⁵⁰ Kreul, *Rilke. Worpswede*, 47. (Die Leute schon so zu sehen ist famos; nun denke Dir aber diese interessantesten Leute bei einem Missionsfest tief andächtig, unter freiem Himmel. Heute morgen fuhren wir per Wagen nach einem nahen Dorf, und ich hörte bis sechs Uhr abends vier Prediger. Das heißt, ich skizzierte während dieser Predigten die andächtigen Leute. Ich bin ganz selig in dem Gedanken, später ein Bild davon malen zu können.)

³⁵¹ *Worpswede eine Künstlerkolonie um 1900*, 69.

³⁵² *Ibid.* 69.

prayer, as do the congregation. Mackensen chose to paint the preacher at a still point in the sermon. He and the congregation appear to be united in silent thought. Additionally, the majority of the group wear their Sunday clothes of black and white, heightening the sense of unity in the painting. There is a sense of spiritual harmony between the villagers, nature and their surroundings. Behind the preacher is a birch tree which leans forward slightly, as if mirroring him in stance and contemplation. From the thatched cottages, to the wooden chairs and the clogs that the villagers wear, there are no modern materials in the painting, only wood and straw. It is as if the congregation's peace and unity come from the fact that they live amongst their natural surroundings, embracing them. Modersohn's painting shares a sense of harmony, united not by a church service but by the stormy weather. The marshes and trees bow to the forces of nature as the wind bears down upon them. The wispy clouds appear to career through the sky, offset by a small flock of black birds which sail through the assault on the elements. The harmonious, warm autumnal colours of the trees, cottages and marshland contrast with the light blues and whites of the sky, yet the reflection of the sky in the river in the foreground enhances the sense of natural concordance. Barely distinguishable from the landscape is a figure in the centre foreground, whose hunched body echoes the bending of the weather-beaten trees. The gleam of her white cap reflects the white of the birches which surround the cottages, again adding to a sense of synchronization. These two Worpswede paintings offer an alternative way of life to that of modern society, a way where the force of nature is felt physically and spiritually. The villagers live in harmony with their natural setting, using it for their housing and way of life. The artists depict their figures here in the landscape without discord, to

illustrate that the landscape is theirs. The villagers' lives are shown to be simple in thought and deed.

As a whole, the Worpswede group had fifty works accepted by the panel at the exhibition which made up a total of over three and a half percent of the overall artworks.³⁵³ They exhibited nineteen works together in one room and the rest were fitted in to the overall display. The artists' combined success with the jury and the *Neue Pinakothek* drew the attention of the press and projected the artists onto a national stage overnight.

The argument follows that the critics of the 1895 *Glaspalast* interpreted the Worpswede artwork through a shared belief system with Langbehn. A sustained longevity of Langbehn's ideas connected to the Worpswede artists will be demonstrated in an examination of the contemporary monographs written on the Worpswede artists.

(vi) The influence of Langbehn beyond the artists' group: The monographs, and their inheritance of Langbehn's ideas.

All of the monographs on Worpswede pay tribute to Rembrandt als Erzieher in some way. Most authors such as Fritz Overbeck, Hans Bethge and Rainer Maria Rilke refer indirectly to the book whilst Warncke, as the first biographer of the group, cited from the book:

What was described in the book *Rembrandt as Educator*, published in 1889, as a means 'to promote the rise of a coming artistic education', the

³⁵³M. Anczykowski (ed.) *Durchbruch*, Worpswede, 1995, 42.

escape from a large city, the preservation of the tribal essence, that is what, independent of the book, the young Braunschweiger Fritz Mackensen had already tried to put into practice; he had already felt for a long time that, in truth, 'the proper artist can never be local enough', in order to live out and do justice to his personality in his works and to thus impart upon them his greatest vigour.³⁵⁴

Paul Warncke, however, interpreted the importance of Rembrandt's legacy as a necessary northern influence on Germans, at a time when Southern painting dominated the artistic consciousness.

The Worpswede monographs:

(i) Warncke's Monograph

Warncke's monograph, of 1902, has until now never been assessed independently. Nina Lübbren used Warncke's monograph to illustrate her point that the author believed what he saw in the artists' paintings was a reality and not an artistic idealisation.³⁵⁵ Peter Lasko also mentions Warncke in order to challenge the widely accepted view that modern art had its roots in France.³⁵⁶ These citations however are merely references to Warncke. His work has not been thoroughly assessed. It has not been mentioned until now that Vogeler took a strong objection to Warncke's work. It is documented in his letters. An

³⁵⁴ Warncke, *Worpswede*, Leipzig, 1902, 5. (Was in dem 1889 erscheinenden Buche *Rembrandt als Erzieher* als ein Mittel, 'den Aufgang einer kommenden künstlerischen Bildung zu fördern', bezeichnet war, die Flucht aus der Großstadt, die Pflege der Stammesart, das hatte unabhängig von jenem Buch, der junge Braunschweiger Fritz Mackensen bereits in der Tat umzusetzen gesucht; er hatte längst empfunden, dass in Wahrheit, 'der rechte Künstler gar nicht lokal genug sein' könnte, um seine Persönlichkeit in seinen Werken ganz auszuleben und zur Geltung zu bringen und diesen so die höchste Kraft zu verleihen..)

³⁵⁵ N. Lübbren, *Rural Artists' Colonies in Europe 1870-1910*, 41.

³⁵⁶ Peter Lasko, *The Expressionist Roots of Modernism*, Manchester, 2003, 26.

examination of them shows that Vogeler's beliefs about what the Worpswede art stood for and strengthens his objection to the author's work.

Warncke claimed the Worpsweders were developers of a new German art. In 1904 he wrote about the Worpswede's work with an overtly nationalistic tone

Did Rembrandt, for instance, of whom one is reminded so much here in Worpswede, ever travel any further than Leyden or Amsterdam? It is from the earth of his homeland that he always drew new strength. And so, exactly because he limited himself, is his art the archetype of the highest, that is a truly national art!

These pictures by the Worpsweder artists, created out of a deepest sentiment, must also be enjoyed with heartfelt concentration like a symphony by Beethoven.³⁵⁷

Warncke believed that the importance of Rembrandt to the Worpsweders was that he inspired them to create a nationalist art form for Germany.³⁵⁸

Where other authors identified with the group's specific association with a village in Lower Saxony, along with its peculiarities and particulars as a testament to regionalist painting, Warncke believed that their paintings were reflective of a national art. This is reiterated in his closing words of this article.

And it is exactly that national element in art that is least of all a matter of thought or of one's disposition! (...) A truly national work of art will only

³⁵⁷ 'Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst', Elfter Jahrgang, Leipzig, 1900, E. A. Seeman, ed. M. G. Zimmerman, Paul Warncke, ('Worpswede', 184. Ist etwa Rembrandt, an den man hier in Worpswede so stark erinnert wird, je über Leyden und Amsterdam hinausgekommen? -- Der Boden der Heimat war es, aus dem ihm immer wider neue Kraft zuströmte. Und so ward gerade weil er sich beschränkte seine Kunst das Urbild höchster, nämlich echt nationaler Kunst! Auch bei diesen aus tiefster Empfindung geschaffen Bildern der Worpsweder, die man genießen muss mit inniger Sammlung wie eine Beethoven'sche Symphonie (sic).)

³⁵⁸ 'Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst', Elfter Jahrgang, Leipzig, 1900, E. A. Seeman, ed. M. G. Zimmerman, Paul Warncke, *Worpswede*, 185.

be created by he who is bound to the land, who is rooted in the familiar soil of his homeland. And so, in the sense of the Worspweder, the artist must understand the appeal of the poet:

Be true to your Fatherland, to your dear land!

And hold this tight with your whole heart!

For here you find the strong roots of your own vigour!³⁵⁹

Vogeler railed against Warncke's publication. He wrote to a subsequent biographer, naming Warncke as the author of the most damaging literature written on the group.

This little book about W. is supposed to have been penned by the vagrant headmaster of a village school. The whole book is so terrible that it does not even cause any damage; this degenerate man is an employee of the press of my beloved hometown. And things do not look good with this press. – Apart from the booklets on German Art, nothing worth reading has been written about me.³⁶⁰

Vogeler derides Warncke as provincial and ignorant when he mockingly calls him a 'village school teacher'. In his article Warncke insinuated that the Worspweaders were *Heimat* artists. This created an interesting paradigm. Although Vogeler himself resented Warncke's interpretation of the Worspwede's work as being in the tradition of *Heimat* art, he had to some degree endorsed the

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 185. (Und gerade jenes nationale Element in der Kunst ist am allerwenigsten Sache des Gedankens oder der Gesinnung! (...) Ein wahrhaft nationales Kunstwerk wird nur der schaffen, der an der Scholle haftet, dem vertrauten Heimatboden wurzelt. Und so, im Sinne der Worspwede, muss der Künstler die Mahnung des Dichters verstehen:

Ans Vaterland, ans teure, schliess dich an!
Das halte fest mit deinem ganzen Herzen!
Hier sind die starken Wurzeln deiner Kraft!)

³⁶⁰ Letter: Heinrich Vogeler: Letter to Hans Bethge, end of 1899, 1. (DLA 57.2163) Dies Büchlein über W. soll von einem vegabundierenden Dorfschulmeister verfasst sein, das ganze ist so fatal, dass es schon nicht einmal mehr schadet; dieser verkommene Kerl ist Mitarbeiter einer, oder der ersten Presse meiner lieben Vaterstadt messen. Der sieht's überhaupt wieder traurig aus [sic.]. – Ausser dem Hefte der Deutschen Kunst ist nichts von Belang über mich geschrieben worden.

idea himself by continually promoting his and his colleagues' work as specifically paintings of 'Worpswede'.³⁶¹ Warncke was keen to claim the artists as *Heimat Künstler*, as defined in the introduction to this thesis. This raises the interesting question of whether the artists only marketed themselves as *Heimat Künstler*.

Adolf Bartels was the contemporary art critic who first gave a definition of the term, *Heimat Künstler*. He defined *Heimat* artists as anti-modernists who embraced the countryside as a rejection of modern industrial society.³⁶² Bartels longed for *Heimat* art which was a High German art form and rejected all foreign influences.³⁶³ The closest Bartels comes to defining *Heimat Künstler* is in the following passage:

Its representatives are more or less talented amateurs who apply the means of great art to their local stuff, as well as they can, i.e. mostly conventionally, but often ruin their own work in the process, or at least are not able to allow it to step forth in its full power.³⁶⁴

All the artists in the group were well travelled and well educated and none were actually from Worpswede, unlike *Heimat* artists as defined by Bartels. He claims the artists working in Worpswede and Dachau in general were *Heimat* artists³⁶⁵ but when he specifically describes the practice of *Heimat* artists the two colonies fall out of his definition. He suggests that a true *Heimat* artist paints from memory the locale of their birth and identifies Clara Viebig (as discussed in the

³⁶¹ See their first publication of prints, 'Aus Worpswede', Fischer and Franke, Berlin, 1897.

³⁶² Thomas Lekan, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor*, London, 1997, 122.

³⁶³ A. Bartels, *Heimatkunst*, 2.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 6 (Ihre Vertreter sind meist mehr oder minder begabte Dilettanten, die die Kunstmittel der großen Kunst auf die heimischen Stoffe, so gut sie es vermögen, d. h. meist konventionell anwenden, deren Eigenes aber dadurch oft verderben, es jedenfalls nicht in voller Mächtigkeit hervortreten zu lassen im Stande sind.)

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 12.

Eifel chapter) as a *Heimat* artist.³⁶⁶ Deciding whether or not the Worpswede artists were really *Heimat* artists is complex, since Bartels openly defined them as such. The following shows how under Bartels' definition the artists do not sit comfortably within the definition of *Heimat* artists.

The most conservative of the group, Mackensen, worked in Leipzig, Dusseldorf and Weimar teaching art students at the academies. Vogeler, as his letters reveal, travelled continuously from 1905-1911 all over Europe and beyond. The Worpswede group exhibited in two important international exhibitions before 1900, in Dresden in the International Exhibition in 1897 and in Vienna at the International Jubilee Exhibition in 1898. It seems incongruous to classify the artists as *Heimat Künstler* due to their international appeal and the fact that, although they lived in Worpswede, many of the artists taught in the cities. The Worpswede artists could not be defined as gifted amateurs as Bartels suggests, neither could Mackensen's seven meter high *Gottesdienst* be described as 'conventional'. Modersohn's impressionistic mood paintings of Worpswede also do not fall into this category. Vogeler as an interior designer, a graphic artist, book illustrator and gifted painter also does not fall into Bartels' categorisation neatly. The Worpswede artists, led by Vogeler, advocated the *Heimat* movement as a more modern concept which, to a degree, embraced industrialisation. The concept of the *Heimat* movement as a modern concept where local inhabitants took a civic pride in their landscape by picking up litter, organising country walks and petitioning for certain areas to be marked off as national parks is a model championed by authors such as Applegate (*A Nation of Provincials*: 1990),

³⁶⁶ Clara Viebig grew up in the Eifel region and moved to Berlin in her teenage years, as an adult she based a series of novels on the place she grew up in.

Confino (*The Nation as Local Metaphor*: 1997) and Lekan (*Imagining the Nation in Nature*: 2004). It has been established that Warncke's interpretation of the Worpswede paintings were through the conservative definition of the *Heimat* movement that was singular and nationalistic. On the other hand, Vogeler's actions broadened the term *Heimat Kunst* since his art was encompassing and pluralistic. Therein lay the difficulty between the artist and Warncke. For example, Vogeler helped to invent a chemical which would stop thatched roofs from burning. This was to encourage the local population to use this traditional roofing method. He was a pioneer of the Garden City Movement and tried to bring industry into Worpswede under the 'back to the land' faction; Vogeler was not anti-modern in the sense of Warncke or Bartel.³⁶⁷ Rather than rejecting modernity entirely he used modern technology to preserve what he saw as a traditional way of life.

(ii) Heinrich Vogeler's influential description of Worpswede's heritage

Recent literature has suggested that the expression of regional allegiance combated Bismarck's conglomeration of small states for the sake of a stable political creation.³⁶⁸ Other authors have focused on the *Heimat* museums, local landscape preservation lobbies or hiking as expressions of regional affection. The argument here is that, landscape painting too, was an expression of regional affection.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁷ Schütze, *Freunde Worpswede*, 28.

³⁶⁸ Eg. C. Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials*, Oxford, 1990.

³⁶⁹ A. Confino, *Nation as Local Metaphor*, London, 1997.

The Worpswede landscape was not particularly striking. The success of the artists lay in their ability to tap into the contemporary pursuit of regional identity through Langbehn's popular hypothesis. The artists openly aligned themselves with the author, consciously and unconsciously, making their work all the more in vogue. The Worpswede circle advocated, with Langbehn, that painting was at its best when it was placed in a specific setting emphasising the particular identity of place. It is true to a degree that the artists marketed their work in terms of *Heimat* art, which made it easier for them to promote themselves. Painting the Worpswede landscape specifically gave their work a strong sense of regional identity creating symbols that were easily articulated and recognised. Even if the buyer knew nothing of Worpswede, he could see, in the way it had been represented, that the village way of life had been the same for hundreds of years.

Vogeler in particular, steered towards becoming an international artist. He had, after all, led the creation of regional identity in Worpswede under the expanded definition of *Heimat Kunst*. Like an artistic magpie he used styles and artistic influences from England and Japan and returned to Worpswede to claim this culmination of international styles to describe Worpswede's traditional heritage.

Vogeler was in frequent contact with foreign artists, including Charles Rennie Mackintosh. As his letters reveal, he was extremely well travelled. Around 1900 he spent three months at a time travelling around Europe.³⁷⁰ Between the years 1906 and 1909 he took several trips to Britain where he met the pre-Raphaelite

³⁷⁰ Letter: Heinrich Vogeler to Hans Bethge, Barkenhof Archive, ref. no. DLA 57.2163, end of 1899

artists Edward Burne-Jones and Gabriel Rossetti.³⁷¹ Around the turn of the century Vogeler's work showed particularly pre-Raphaelite qualities. The painting *Abschied*, of 1896, shows a particular likeness to John William Waterhouse's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* of 1893, executed three years previously. Both paintings feature the same subject [Figs. 8 and 9]. Famously the Pre-Raphaelites featured popular stories from English literature in their work. Waterhouse's painting is based on the John Keats (1795-1821) poem with the same title. It describes a medieval knight's encounter with a fairy which was to be his downfall. Vogeler's painting features a woman crying and the knight touching her shoulder. The weeping woman is a reference to the Keats poem, where the fairy also wept. Stylistic similarities however are much more apparent in the painting *Frühling* of 1898 [Fig. 10]. The figure's green dress with long sleeves is certainly inspired by the characteristic dress of the wistful women featured in pre-Raphaelite paintings.

Vogeler's expressive line and his negation of illusionistic space are also reminiscent of the Japanese prints which were circulating in the European market. With their clean lines and flat appearance, these paintings could easily be transferred to an etching. Their two dimensional perspective would lend itself to this treatment. The artist himself confessed he was 'a great admirer of Japanese art'³⁷², as his extensive collection of Ukiyoe prints demonstrates. Between the years 1911 and 1914 Vogeler shared an artistic dialogue with a

³⁷¹ H. Osborne, *The concise encyclopedia of Symbolism*, New York, 1979, 292

³⁷² Y. Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, Open University, London, 1999, 10 .

Japanese group of artists called *The Shirakaba group*. He even designed a logo for them.³⁷³

His work, therefore, was not representative of an exclusively German tradition as Warncke would have one believe. Vogeler was undoubtedly inspired by William Morris's utopian ideas and his art. This only came to light in Germany after the artists' death when his obituaries were published in Germany.³⁷⁴ As early as 1909 Vogeler had already become quite political, in a letter he wrote to the *Kaiser*, (which he later had published in *Der Sozialist*) he wrote, 'Wir sind alle einig darin, dass der Sozialismus nur dadurch beginnen kann, dass die Sozialisten mit dem ganzen Menschen, mit ihrer Produktion und ihrem Konsum aus dem Kapitalismus austreten'.³⁷⁵ In addition, Vogeler collaborated with William Morris on the title pages for Morris's story, *The Story of the Glittering Plain* [Fig. 11]. In 1911 *Die Insel* published a set of Oscar Wilde's stories which were illustrated by Vogeler.³⁷⁶ Vogeler's political and creative exchange of ideas with his British contemporaries does not place him as a typically conventional *Heimat* artist.

In truth, his stylistic influence paid homage more to the Pre-Raphaelites than to Rembrandt. Rembrandt's heavily laden oil rich canvases with strong chiaroscuro are poles apart from Vogeler's bright, clean lines. Yet authors like Warncke and Rilke, chose to interpret Rembrandt als Erzieher as an actual tribute to Rembrandt's painting rather than recognising what he symbolised for Langbehn.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ H. Eckert, *The Impact of Morris and the Kelmscott Press in Germany*, 'Journal of William Morris Studies' [Spring, 1995] 20.

³⁷⁵ H. Vogeler, *Brief an der Kaiser*, 'Der Sozialist', No. 1, 1909, 88.

³⁷⁶ Oscar Wilde, *Die Erzählungen und Märchen von Oscar Wilde*, Insel Verlag, Munich, 1911.

For Langbehn and the Worpswede the time in which Rembrandt lived had been much less complicated. Rembrandt himself was a humanist, whose work hung in his nation's capital, Amsterdam, and had continued to be appreciated by his own countrymen during his own lifetime and after his death. Langbehn's much cited statement 'er malt holländisch' was a testament as much to Rembrandt himself as to the strength of his country's identity. The Germans' feelings about their country as a nation and how it was viewed by the rest of the world, was much less secure.

Rilke's Monograph

Almost all the literature on Worpswede uses Rilke's book as a reference. Rilke lived among the artists in Worpswede for a time and is considered by some to be the illegitimate step-son of the group.³⁷⁷

In 2003 the Bremen Kunsthalle organised an exhibition to commemorate 100 years of the publication of Rilke's monograph. Alongside the exhibition the museum re-published the monograph with an excellent collection of essays at the end. In the main, however, the essays discuss the book as an independent text, without reference to Langbehn's work. The essays largely feature the story of how the book came to print and the history of the artists in the colony.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁷ The monograph which is referenced here is a publication to mark the hundredth anniversary of the first, it is an exact copy of the original 1902 version but without the Gothic script, which is why it has been used here. For the original version, which follows the same page numbers, see: R. M. Rilke, *Worpswede*, 1902, Worpswede.

³⁷⁸ A. Kreul (ed.) *Rilke. Worpswede. Eine Ausstellung als Phantasie über ein Buch*, Bremen, 2003.

The illustrious German poet, Rainer Maria Rilke, had been approached to write about the Worpswede with Gustav Pauli's financial assistance some time before 1902. He only began the book when financial necessity left him little option. Rilke had lived among the artists for several years. He was considered to be an extended member of the colony.³⁷⁹ Rilke's monograph was the most academic of all the books on Worpswede; he quotes from the artists' letters, diaries and publications to which it seems he was given free access. Even before the poet had moved to Lower Saxony, Rilke and Vogeler had shared an artistic dialogue. Rilke sent Vogeler his poems and the artist sent Rilke his etchings.³⁸⁰ At a ceremony to open the additional new buildings at the Bremen Kunsthalle, both Rilke and Vogeler combined their artistic efforts in a short performance. They stated that the importance of the museum was its spiritual influence, it was a temple of education.

The exhibition was supposed to show that one cannot interpret art according to outward appearance, or rationally; art is a spiritual undertaking, one must feel art. A gallery is not an educational institute, but a holy place, a temple.³⁸¹

Like Langbehn, both individuals subscribed to the contemporary idealistic view that art had the power to change society for the better. Rilke's sentiments echoed Langbehn's in various ways. Rilke wrote in a similarly lyrical manner to Langbehn. They wrote as though they were documenting a stream of consciousness rather than writing an academic text. In an essay on Rilke, Judith

³⁷⁹ Letter from Heinrich Vogeler to Hans Bethge

³⁸⁰ Kreul, *Rilke. Worpswede*, 2003, 323-324.

³⁸¹ B. Arnold, *In Erster Linie Hausbau' Heinrich Vogeler und die Bremer Reformarchitekten*, Worpswede 2002, 112. (The exhibition was supposed to show that one cannot interpret art according to outward appearance, or rationally; art is a spiritual undertaking, one must feel art. A gallery is not an educational institute, but a holy place, a temple.)

Ryan comments that 'from an early point in his career (Rilke) prefers to use either interior monologue or free indirect discourse.'³⁸²

Rilke credited Modersohn with the formation of the colony rather than Mackensen. Rilke wrote that there were only three groups of people who could truly appreciate the countryside: farmers, artists and, conveniently, poets. Like Langbehn, he was also keen to state that there was a current revival in German art. Vogeler and Rilke revered the same painters to state their point of a revival in German art and included Arnold Böcklin, Phillipp Otto Runge, and Anselm Feuerbach as examples of accomplished German artists.³⁸³ ³⁸⁴ About Rembrandt himself Rilke wrote

Does the secret and the grandeur of Rembrandt perhaps not lie in the fact that he saw and painted people as landscapes? Using the medium of light and twilight, with which one captures the nature of the morning or the secret of the evening, he spoke of the life of those who he painted and what he painted became expansive and immense. In his Biblical paintings and sheets, it is surprising to what extent he does without trees, in order to use the people like trees and bushes. Think about the painting "Christ Heals the Sick": does the flock of beggars and invalids not grovel there like low, many-branched undergrowth along the walls, and does Christ not stand there like a towering, lonely tree at the edge of the ruins? We do not know many landscapes from Rembrandt, and yet he was the landscaper,

³⁸² (Eds.) Erika A. Metzger and Micheal M. Metzger, *A companion to the works of Rainer Maria Rilke*, 'Rilke's Early Narratives', Judith Ryan, 2001, New York, 81.

³⁸³ Kreul, *Worpswede, Rilke* 23-27.

³⁸⁴ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 34.

the greatest perhaps, who ever lived, and one of the greatest painters ever. He could paint portraits, because he looked deep into the faces like one looks deep into lands with a wide horizon and a high, cloudy and turbulent sky.³⁸⁵

Rilke introduces the Worpswede group with an affirmation of Rembrandt's work. He attempts to classify Rembrandt as a landscape artist, as he argues that the figures in his work have an organic quality. He states that Rembrandt was perhaps the greatest of all landscape artists. Rilke asserts that even though there are not many well-known Rembrandt landscapes, he was still a landscape artist, perhaps the most impressive of all.³⁸⁶ Rilke says this without mentioning what exactly it was that the author appreciated in Rembrandt's paintings. He compares Rembrandt's generic images of Christ to those of trees, asserting that they have the same spiritual quality. This is an observation which carries weight amongst the pantheistic work of the landscape artists in the colony. In his last comment about Rembrandt's portraits, he states that the artist takes inspiration from living in a country with wide horizons. This is another reference to the Worpswede group because they settled in a similar landscape. He implies that, they too, took inspiration from their natural surroundings.

³⁸⁵Kreul, (ed) *Worpswede. Rilke*, 22. (Liegt nicht vielleicht darin das Geheimnis und die Hoheit Rembrandts, daß er Menschen wie Landschaften sah und malte? Mit den Mitteln des Lichtes und der Dämmerung, mit denen man das Wesen des Morgens oder das Geheimnis des Abends erfaßt, sprach er von dem Leben derjenigen, die er malte, und es wurde weit und gewaltig dabei. Auf seinen biblischen Bildern und Blättern überrascht es geradezu, wie sehr er auf Bäume verzichtet, um die Menschen wie Bäume und Büsche zu gebrauchen. Man erinnere sich des Hundertguldenblattes: Kriecht da die Schar der Bettler und Bresthaften nicht wie niederes, vielarmiges Gestrüpp an den Mauern hin, und steht Christus nicht wie ein ragender, einsamer Baum am Rande der Ruine? Wir kennen nicht viele Landschaften von Rembrandt, und doch war er Landschaftler, der größte vielleicht, den es je gegeben hat, und einer der größten Maler überhaupt. Er konnte Porträts malen, weil er in die Gesichter tief hineinsah wie in Länder mit weitem Horizont und hohem, wolkigem, bewegten Himmel.)

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

The following passage comes from Rilke's introduction. His declaration holds the qualities of a manifesto for the Worpswede artists' colony and yet again follows Langbehn's philosophy.

Just as language no longer has anything in common with the things it names, the way people behave in the cities has lost all relation to the earth; they hang, as it were, in the air, sway back and forth and do not find a place they might settle. The peasants who Millet paints still possess those few great movements that are silent and humble and which find the quickest way towards the earth. And the human being, the demanding, nervous dweller of the cities, feels himself ennobled in these dull peasants. He who is in harmony with nothing sees in them living beings who spend their lives closer to nature, yes he is even inclined to see them as heroes, because they succeed, despite the fact that nature remains hard and impassive to them, just as it is against him.³⁸⁷

Rilke laments that city dwellers have lost their way but declares the farmers are still rooted in their soil. He reflects Langbehn's view of the peasant as the great leveller of society. Otto Modersohn's painting *Herbstmorgen am Moorkanal* of c. 1895 [Fig. 3] illustrates Rilke's point since it resonates with the above passage from Rilke's introduction. The painting shows the farmers living harmoniously on the spoils of the land. The farmers are, in Rilke's sense, not only connected to

³⁸⁷ Kreul, (ed) *Rilke. Worpswede*, 24 (Ähnlich wie die Sprache nichts mehr mit den Dingen gemein hat, welche sie nennt, so haben die Gebärden der meisten Menschen, die in den Städten leben, ihre Beziehung zur Erde verloren, sie hängen gleichsam in der Luft, schwanken hin und her und finden kein Ort, wo sie sich niederlassen könnten. Die Bauern, welche Millet malt, haben noch jene wenigen großen Bewegungen, welche still und einfach sind und immer auf dem kürzesten Wege auf die Erde zugehen. Und der Mensch, der anspruchsvolle, nervöse Bewohner der Städte, fühlt sich geadelt in diesen stumpfen Bauern. Er, der mit nichts im Einklang steht, sieht in ihnen Wesen, die näher an der Natur ihr Leben verbringen, ja er ist geneigt, in ihnen Helden zu sehen, weil sie es tun, obwohl die Natur gegen sie gleich hart und teilnahmslos bleibt, wie gegen ihn.)

the soil out of necessity for the purpose of their livelihood but are also connected spiritually. This is portrayed in the painting's harmonious quality. From Modersohn's autumnal series, this painting is characteristic of his many depictions of Worpswede. He created a sense of harmony through his use of colour and composition. The painting shows two half-timbered thatched cottages which stand behind a row of birches. The white trunks of the birch trees are reflected in the vertical lines of the half-timbered houses. The masses of leaves reflect the roofs of the cottages in form and colour. The leaf bunches are formed like two sets of oblongs which echo the shape of the thatched roofs. The houses are made of local materials, straw, trees and mud, suggesting that the moor dweller's lives were untouched by modernization. The artist's use of a limited palette adds to a sense of serenity since almost everything in the painting is either green, beige, or white, (excluding the two figures who both wear blue and red). Modersohn repeatedly painted autumnal scenes. He consistently depicts the natural bounty of harvest, suggesting his admiration for nature's eternal wealth rather than man's ephemeral materialism.

Vogeler's painting *Abschied* of c. 1896 is a depiction of a couple, modelled on the artist and his wife within the setting of their garden [Fig. 8]. Vogeler depicts his own image as a knight. He often referred to himself as *a King* and his wife, *the Princess*. It is easy to see how some have interpreted the artist as a fantasist. Rilke himself wrote that Vogeler's works conjured a fairytale world, invoking the words, 'Once upon a time...'³⁸⁸ Rilke continues:

³⁸⁸. Kreul, *Rilke. Worpswede*, 124.

So much has not been painted, maybe everything. And the landscape lies there as virginal as on the first day. Lying there as if waiting for someone who is greater, more powerful, lonelier. For someone who's time has not yet come.³⁸⁹

In this respect his work was different from the other members of the group who continually painted similar motifs to one another. This is referred to in the introduction. Vogeler's distinct subject matter underscores the fact that he was not the artistic propagator of the group. He acted as the commercial director of the group.

Biographer Ralph Freeman argues that Rilke's glorification of the countryside was born out of a personal dislike of Paris, where he had recently been living.³⁹⁰ Rilke's veneration of nature was born out of his distrust of modernization and the associated rapid population growth, mounting industrialization and emergent pollution in the countryside. The Wilhelmine Parliament passed a law in 1907 titled 'Law against the deformation of villages and regions with exceptional landscapes'³⁹¹ highlighting a contemporary concern for landscapes and villages which were considered to have particular rural charm.

Considering this, Rilke's environmental concerns are a reflection of a wider contemporary national sentiment,

We lead the rivers to our factories, but they know nothing of the machines they drive. We play with the dark powers that we are unable

³⁸⁹ Kreul, *Rilke. Worpswede*, 207. (Es ist so vieles nicht gemalt worden, vielleicht alles. Und die Landschaft liegt unverbraucht da wie am ersten Tag. Liegt da, als wartete sie auf einen, der größer ist, mächtiger, einsamer. Auf einen, dessen Zeit noch nicht gekommen ist.)

³⁹⁰ Ralph Freedman, *Life of a Poet: Rainer Maria Rilke*, New York, 1996.

³⁹¹ July 15th 1907

to capture with our names, like children playing with fire and, for a moment, it seems as if all energy up to now lay unspent in the things themselves until we came to use them for our fleeting lives and our needs. However, again and again, in thousands of years, the powers shake off their names and rise up like a suppressed class against their small masters, not even against them - they simply rise up and the cultures fall from the shoulders of the earth, which is once again great and broad and alone with its seas, trees and stars.³⁹²

Rilke describes natural resources as naive, willing participants in humans' evil strategy; the unwitting rivers are used to drive man's wicked machines. Again he considers the Worpswede's interpretation of Rembrandt als Erzieher to be an instructive moral guide which informed much of their achievements in Lower Saxony. Rilke believed artists were a dying breed of people who could truly appreciate and understand nature.³⁹³ It follows that artists were ideal champions for the cause of nature conservation. Thus, this highlights that, beyond creating a regional identity, the Worpswede paintings were engaged in a sense of nature preservation.

Bethge's Monograph

³⁹² Kreul, *Rilke. Worpswede*, 18-19 (Wir führen die Flüsse zu unseren Fabriken hin, aber sie wissen nichts von den Maschinen, die sie treiben. Wir spielen mit dunklen Kräften, die wir mit unseren Namen nicht erfassen können, wie Kinder mit dem Feuer spielen, und es scheint einen Augenblick, als hätte alle Energie bisher ungebraucht in den Dingen gelegen, bis wir kamen, um sie auf unser flüchtiges Leben und seine Bedürfnisse anzuwenden. Aber immer und immer wieder in Jahrtausenden schütteln die Kräfte ihre Namen ab und erheben sich, wie ein unterdrückter Stand gegen ihre kleinen Herren, ja nicht einmal gegen sie, - sie stehen einfach auf, und die Kulturen fallen von den Schultern der Erde, die wieder groß ist und weit und allein mit ihren Meeren, Bäumen und Sternen.)

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 20

The only book on Worpswede to mention the Bethge monograph is *Worpswede: eine Künstlerkolonie um 1900*.³⁹⁴ However, the book is only quoted and not analysed at all. As with many other primary sources quoted in this book, the passage comes under the heading, *Worpswede Tagebuch*. Therefore, this section builds on previous research, which has highlighted the book to be one of merit. Until now, no one has analysed this small Worpswede monograph. Certainly no academic has looked at the archival correspondence between Bethge and Vogeler to discover how the artist encouraged the author to interpret the colony.

The present work offers a detailed analysis of the Worpsweders' history by looking at how the group marketed themselves under Vogeler's leadership, Vogeler had specific ideas about how he wished the colony to be perceived and outlined them in his letters to Bethge. Bethge's monograph clearly reflects Vogeler's influence and his interpretation of Rembrandt als Erzieher, rather than Langbehn's text. Rilke's work was not a financial success and therefore must have been a disappointment to Vogeler who was ever keen to raise the profile of the colony and draw in tourists to subsidise the Worpswede economy. Vogeler was subject to pressing financial considerations: his wife's medical bills and the upkeep of his grand house. The artist wrote to the art connoisseur Alfred Heymel on the subject of his expenses.

I have finally completed my house here and it is rather comfortable as far as heating, water supply and space to work goes. Unfortunately it was built too expensively – a millstone round my neck and I cannot move from

³⁹⁴ Stock and Noeres, (eds) *Worpswede eine Künstlerkolonie um 1900*, 58

the spot. However, better times will come! The main thing is that work is going well.³⁹⁵

It could be assumed that the artist was frustrated by both Warncke's and Rilke's monographs, Vogeler coached Hans Bethge to write a book which would illustrate his vision of how he wished Worpswede to be perceived. Bethge, a well known German author, worked with excellent contacts in the art world, including the successful art historian Richard Muther with whom he published the book. He was an ideal candidate for Vogeler's purposes. Indeed, it was he that Vogeler wrote to when he first showed an interest in writing a biography of the artists, warning him of Warncke's publications. By the time Bethge came to write his monograph there were rifts in the group, caused by the literature already published and growing competition between the group's members.³⁹⁶

Vogeler was determined to prime Bethge for a book which best portrayed his own coherent vision of the colony. He was so zealous to endorse and control the appearance of the book that he even designed the cover and layout with twelve additional etchings as chapter headings.³⁹⁷ [Figs. 12 and 13] It was Vogeler who was the main driving force behind the publication of the book.³⁹⁸ In a letter he wrote to Bethge:

Otherwise the Worpswede art held little interest for me and what gives the most are the Memlings, van der Goes, Dürers and the old Italians; and

³⁹⁵ Letter from Heinrich Vogeler to Alfred Walter Heyemel, 07/05/1909, DLA 62.1879/12, Barkenhoff-Stiftung Worpswede. (Ich habe mir hier mein Haus jetzt endlich recht comfortable zusammengebaut, was Heizung, Wasserverorgung und Arbeitsräume anbetrifft. Leider zu theuer (sic.) gebaut – Klotz am Bein, kann mich nicht rühren. Aber bessere Zeiten werden schon kommen! die (sic.) Hauptsache ist, dass die Arbeit geht.)

³⁹⁶ Otto Modersohn's Diary, 1895, Otto Modersohn Museum, 155-157

³⁹⁷ Bethge, *Worpswede*, 1904, Berlin, pub. Bard Marquardt and Co.

³⁹⁸ See letters at the Barkenhof Stiftung Archiv: Vogeler to Hans Bethge, 1899 (DLA 57.2163), Vogeler to Hans Bethge, 04.08.01 (DLA 57.2171) and Vogeler to Hans Bethge, 05.07.00, (DLA 57.2165)

I get even more out of music – Bach, the powerful architectural and Mozart the free naive one. – the thatched cottage an apparently even older snug great grandmother’s house; on the walls stand heavy Empire urns and a wide stairway flanked by round laurel bushes leads down to the garden in bloom. The lawn covered in dewdrops, the elders blooming like giant round mounds of flowers. Do you know, Dr. Bethge, you really have to see a German June like this, an orgy in green overwhelmed by flowers and the rejoicing birds in the air!³⁹⁹

This section of Vogeler’s self-consciously written letter is revealing for several reasons. At this juncture, Bethge had proposed to write a monograph about the Worpswede artists. He was a sound contact for Vogeler with good connections to the literati of Germany. Vogeler used the opportunity to raise the artists’ profile in his letters to Bethge. Firstly, his reference to ‘Worpswede Kunst’ (which he mentions again elsewhere in the letter) implies that he believes there is now a style attributable to the art in the region, or at least that he wants to persuade Bethge of this. He also suggests that those students who have seen Worpswede are the only ones who can attain real originality since they observe unique and quaint characteristics inherent to the region, rather than the generic motifs copied from the old masters. Bethge was from Bremen, so when Vogeler instructs him to see a German summer again, it is to highlight the fact that the flowers of a German summer are different from those of France or Italy. Furthermore, he suggests that since the artists paint a landscape which is so

³⁹⁹ Letter: Heinrich Vogeler to Hans Bethge, 05/07/00 (DLA 57.2165), 3-4. (Sonst interessiert mich von Worpsweder Kunst eigentlich wenig und am meisten geben mir die Memlings, van der Goes, Dürers und die alten Italiener; und recht viel giebt mir die Musik, Bach der mächtige architektonische und Mozart der freie naive. – der laten (*sic.*) strohbedachten Hütte ein scheinbar nach älteres behagliches Urgrossmutterhaus; auf den Mauern stehen dicke Empireurnen (*sic.*) und ein (*sic.*) breite Treppen (*sic.*), zur Seite stehn runde Lorbeern, führt in den blumigen Garten hinunter (.) augenblicklich Rasen tropften, dann blüht der Hollander (*sic.*) wie riesige runde Blumenhaufen. Wissen Sie, Herr Dr. Bethge, Sie müssten mal so einen deutschen Juni sehen, eine Orgie in Grün überschüttet mit Blumen und die jubelnden Vögel in der Luft!)

singular it follows that so is their art. Aligning himself with Langbehn, Vogeler intended to demonstrate to Bethge that he celebrated individualism. Additionally, his mention of the impressive music of Beethoven and Mozart is a tribute to Langbehn, whom the artist held in such high esteem.⁴⁰⁰ It is reasoned here that Vogeler was keen to encourage Bethge to interpret the Worpsweder's work through Langbehn's ideology.

At this point Bethge had already visited Worpswede several times. However, Vogeler reiterated the attributes he wishes him to recall before writing his monograph: the thatched roofs, wide steps and Worpswede's traditional ambiance. This correspondence illustrates the way in which the artist wished the outside world to view the artists' colony: original yet traditional while grounded in German culture. It also shows the extent to which Vogeler attempted to control the image of Worpswede. In Bethge's monograph he reflects on Vogeler's impression of a summer day when he wrote

It is a summer day. We climb up to the Weyerberg Plateau, covered with its many fields, which slopes gently downwards towards the south and south-east, and let our eyes take in the colourful image of the surrounding countryside. At our feet the fruitful agrarian land rolls like a broad wave downhill losing itself in the flatlands below. The ears of corn sway golden in the sunlight, the green of the potato fields here, and stripes of bright yellow buckwheat there; there a patch of heather, violet and aromatic in the sunlight from its blooms; bees and a thousand other insects make their way humming through the bell-shaped flowers (...) groups of trees

⁴⁰⁰ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 22 for reference of Beethoven and 24 for reference on Mozart.

populate the entire landscape in smaller and larger congeries: birches, oaks, poplars, pines and ashes. The pathways are almost always lined by birches. It really is the Worpswede tree. Sometimes slim and delicate, with thin, shy trunks and lightly shimmering leaves, blowing like the hair of a girl at the slightest breeze. Sometimes gnarled, crooked, with wild roots and tousled branches, just as the tree grows in peaty soils.⁴⁰¹

Vogeler described the Worpswede summer as an orgy of colour and blooming flowers. Bethge in turn reflects the artist's words in his description of the Worpswede summer. The author describes the picturesque countryside on a walk he took through the area where Vogeler lived. Bethge mentions all the trees but highlights that he thought the birch trees as epitomizing the identity of the village. It seems then no coincidence that the birch in particular featured heavily in Vogeler's work. The artist based much of his work on views of his own garden, where there were, of course, many birch trees. The name of his farmhouse 'Barkenhof' is a derivative of the words *birken* and *hof* which mean birch yard. It seems obvious then that Bethge had Vogeler's work in particular in mind when he wrote his monograph. Subsequently, Bethge mentions the thatched roofed cottages which Vogeler referred to in his letter. Bethge wrote:

⁴⁰¹ Bethge *Worpswede*, 9 (Es ist ein Sommertag. Wir steigen auf das mit Feldern bedeckte Plateau des Weyerberges, das sich nach Süden und Südosten sanft hinabsenkt, und lassen unser Auge das bunte Bild der Umgebung in sich aufnehmen. Zu unseren Füßen ziehen sich fruchttragende Äcker die breite Welle des Berges hinab und verlieren sich in die Ebene. Die Ähren des Getreides wogen golden im Sonnenlicht, dort grünen Kartoffelfelder, hier ein Streifen knallgelber Buchweizen, da ein Flecken Heide, violett und duftend im Sonnenlicht, denn die Erika blüht, und Bienen und tausend andere Insekten ziehen summend durch ihre Blütenglöckchen(...) Baumgruppen durchsetzen das ganze Land, in kleinen und größeren Komplexen: Birken, Eichen, Pappeln, Kiefern und Eschen. Die Wege sind fast immer von der Birke flankiert (*sic.*). Sie ist recht der Worpsweder Baum. Bald schlank und zart, mit dünnen, schüchternen Stämmchen und hellschimmerndem Laubwerk, das sich im Windhauch regt gleich duftigem Mädchenhaar. Bald knorrig, verwachsen, mit wildem Wurzelwerk und zerzausten Zweigen, so wie der Baum in den Torfgründen wächst.)

‘The houses of the peasants weighed down by their heavy, moss-covered thatched roofs stand around in picturesque irregularity.’⁴⁰²

The archival research shows that Vogeler underscored the features of Worpswede in his letters to Bethge which the artist thought unique so that the author would reflect his viewpoint and endorse the artists’ stylised image of Worpswede to a wider audience. Worpswede did of course have a lot of farmers who lived under thatched roofed cottages in the countryside but their lives were not as idyllic as the artists’ paintings suggest. A personal friend of Vogeler’s, the author Karl Lilienthal, wrote a book on the moor colonists in which he made the following commentary on desperate situation of the farmers’ lives.:

Everything was very primitive; meals, simple, solid and eaten abundantly were seen as a pause from work, interrupting the peat-digging and therefore to be finished quickly. The work began at 4 o’clock in the morning. Breakfast was eaten 4 hours later. This usually consisted of buckwheat pancakes, stiff and hard as leather, and bread and cheese. After another four hours, on the dot of 12, steaming hot pea or bean soup was served. Then half an hour of rest, stretched out, wooden clogs or a skirt as a pillow, and then back to work again. At 4 in the afternoon there was coffee with bread and raw or cooked ham, then everybody worked again until sundown. The working day did not end until 10 pm. And the last chunk of bread no longer tasted good.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰² Bethge, *Worpswede*, 4.

⁴⁰³ Boulboulle and Zeiss, *Worpswede*, 39-40, cited after Karl Lilienthal, *Teufelsmoor*, 1931, 245. (Alles war auf das Primitiviste eingerichtet; Mahlzeiten, einfach, derb und ergiebig eingenommen, galten als Arbeitunterbrechung, die das Torfgeschäft verhinderten und darum schnell erledigt werden. Um 4 Uhr morgens begann die Arbeit. 4 Stunden später wurde frühstückt. Meist gab es Buchweizenpfannkuchen, steif und fest wie Leder, Brot und Käse. Nach weiteren vier Stunden, Punkt 12 Uhr, dampfte die Erbsen- oder Bohnensuppe im Topf. Eine halbe Stunde Rast, langgestreckt, den Rock

Bethge's reference to the Worpswede landscape as having a 'holländisch-niederdeutschen Charakter'⁴⁰⁴ is as much a tribute to the similar landscapes as an acknowledgement to the enduring legacy of Dutch artists on the Worpsweder painters.

In his introduction to the book Bethge wrote:

Worpswede is until now, thank God, still a corner of the world far from the road. Locomotives still do not steam their way past it and only the post coach reaches us here. To the north-east of Bremen, about two miles from the city, from out of a swampy, tranquil land an extended hill, the only one as far as the eye can see: the Weyerberg. On the one side it is almost completely bare, with nothing but wildly growing heather through which the bees hum and single low pines stand around. On the other side, a young wood populated by different trees stretches along the hillside. At the foot of this lies the small village of Worpswede.⁴⁰⁵

This introduction to *Worpswede* reflects Vogeler's perceptions of the village as a hidden gem, a rural location with no signs of industry. Bethge describes his journey to the village as a pilgrimage, in much the same way that Modersohn did

oder die Holzschuhe unter dem Kopf, dann begann die Arbeit aufs neue. Um 4 Uhr gab es Kaffee mit Brot und rohem Speck oder Schinken, dann setzte man erneut die Kräfte bis Sonnenuntergang ein. Erst um 22 Uhr ist Feierabend. Der letzte Bissen Brot will nicht mehr schmecken.)

⁴⁰⁴ Bethge, *Worpswede*, 8.

⁴⁰⁵ Bethge, *Worpswede*, 1. (Worpswede ist bis jetzt, gottlob! Noch immer ein Winkel abseits von der Straße. Die Eisenbahn dampft noch nicht daran vorbei, nur auf der Postkutsche ist es zu erreichen. Nordöstlich von Bremen erhebt sich, zwei Meilen etwa von der Stadt entfernt, aus einem moorigen, stillen Land eine langgestreckte Anhöhe, die einzige, soweit das Auge reicht: der Weyerberg. Auf der einen Seite ist er fast kahl, nur mit wucherndem Heidekraut, durch das die Bienen summen, und einzelnen niedrigen Kiefern bestanden. Auf der andern Seite dehnt sich ein junger Wald verschiedener Hölzer entlang. Zu dessen Füßen ersteckt sich das kleine Dorf Worpswede.)

in a letter to Mackensen.⁴⁰⁶ He describes the village as a God-forsaken place. He mentions that there are no train stations in the vicinity and that he had to change to a connecting bus to the nearest village and walk from there. He continues that the success of Worpswede as an artistic centre is precisely because it is in a remote location. Unlike other artists colonies' there was no neighbouring large art academy from which the artists could base themselves.⁴⁰⁷ Worpswede itself was the base from which the artists launched their careers. The village lacked identity so that the artists were free to create a character themselves for the village. It has been shown here that Vogeler clearly conceived of a character for the village which he conveyed to Bethge in his correspondences with him. The author then publicized this image of the village in his monograph.

The Langbehn book clearly had an impact on all the contemporary literature written on Worpswede whether directly or indirectly. It's been shown that both Rilke and Warnke mentioned Langbehn's text directly.

In conclusion Langbehn had revered the individual northern character of Germany's provinces. All the authors of the monographs were keen to claim that the artists' work was as an authentic description of this landscape. The founding artists in the Worpswede colony all depicted the village in a similar way, as quite idyllic. The artists openly accepted the poverty in the area. However, none of them acknowledged the effects that the grinding rural poverty had on the lives of the local farmers and how it engulfed them.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁰⁷ Bethge, *Worpswede*, 2.

The authors of the monographs all describe the village in a similar way, complimenting its individual characteristics such as its thatched roofed cottages and the flat landscape. Lübbren describes this phenomenon as 'place myth'. As previously mentioned, she argued that the authors of the monographs had seen so many paintings with repeated iconographic themes that they were writing about Worpswede as though the idealistic images that they had seen were a true depiction of the village.⁴⁰⁸

Clearly though, Vogeler was able to influence the authors on the colony to write about the village in a way which he perceived as suitable. By maintaining close contact with such authors he was able to manipulate the way in which they wrote. Vogeler wanted Worpswede to be seen as an idyllic, traditional German village.

Behind and beyond *Rembrandt als Erzieher*:

(i) Zola's depraved city folk and Langbehn's peaceful peasants

Langbehn's angst about the corruption of the city and his veneration of the natural environment were current trends in European thought. The successful French author, Émile Zola, had written around twenty novels to popular acclaim by the time Langbehn came to write his Rembrandt book. Zola's books were a reflection of modern Parisian society, revealed by the author to be a hotbed of immorality in a time of a flourishing economy. They examine the influence of the Industrial Revolution on contemporary French society. In Zola's book *Thérèse*

⁴⁰⁸ Lübbren, *Rural Artists' Colonies in Europe*, 118.

Raquin the author's protagonist, Thérèse, a woman who had lived in the country all of her life and who had enjoyed its space and freedom, arrives to live and work in Paris. The author describes her arrival:

When Therese entered the shop where she was going to live now, it seemed she was descending into the clammy soil of a grave. A sort of disgust took her by the throat, she was shivering with fear. She looked at the gallery dirty and wet, she visited the store, went upstairs, walked around each room and these bare rooms without furniture, looked frightful in their solitude and dilapidation. The young woman could not make a gesture, or utter a word. It was like ice. Her aunt and her husband was downstairs, she sat on a trunk, her hands rigid, her throat full of sobs, unable to cry.⁴⁰⁹

Langbehn himself denounced Zola directly as a crass pessimist.⁴¹⁰ Their obvious differences in short were that Langbehn was a romantic by heart and Zola a realist. Langbehn objected to what he called 'scientificism' or objectivity.

However, both authors were engaged with similar issues. They were both concerned with the overcrowding of Europe's ever expanding cities which did not have the resources to cope with the mass migration from the countryside. Zola's work, *The Haussmannisation of Paris* reflected his times, and brought the social question to the fore. The intense industrialisation of the Second Industrial Revolution changed the face of developed European cities, Napoleon III's treatment of Paris epitomised the modern era.

⁴⁰⁹ E. Zola, *Therese Raquin*, 20.

⁴¹⁰ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 43.

The authors diverged on one integral issue for Langbehn, the peasant. In his novel *La Terra* Zola describes peasant life as brutal and unregulated, his protagonist was a rapist and murderer.⁴¹¹ Langbehn idealised the country folk of Germany as peace-loving individuals who were at the heart of a well functioning society in perfect harmony with with the monarchical hierarchy.⁴¹²

Like his German forefather, Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, Langbehn attested that rural peasants were the great leveller of German society; they were at peace with God and nature.⁴¹³ The peasants painted in the Worpswede landscapes therefore carried this connotation. They were symbols of a society that had not experienced revolution. The idea therefore of peaceful peasants was in direct opposition to French society and reinforced a sense of German national pride. Riehl's view of the instinctively peaceful peasant, happy with his lot is documented here.

In summary: through the kind of work he does, the peasant maintains himself as a kind of preserver of our most genuine national relics in our people and our settlements, our customs and language. He shows us the basic features of the character of our people, quiescent, committed, prevailing in naive instinct. And this quiescence is not death, it only looks like death because, beneath its apparently rigid shell, the peasant

⁴¹¹ E. Zola, *The Earth*, Penguin, 1980.

⁴¹² Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 124.

⁴¹³ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 124-125.

tradition nevertheless lives a wise life and also silently pushes this persisting group of people in our society forwards.⁴¹⁴

After the French Revolution there was a fear that revolts from below would reverberate throughout Europe.⁴¹⁵ Riehl and Langbehn's satisfaction with the subdued, peaceful peasants is testament to the relative peace Germany enjoyed in the late nineteenth century but it also reflects the fear that the peasants had the potential power to overturn the country.

Fritz Stern also highlighted Langbehn's celebration of the peaceful peasant, it is shown here that the Worpswede artists reflected Langbehn's idealized rural worker.⁴¹⁶ The submissive rural peasants depicted in the Worpswede paintings reflect Langbehn's view that the rural working classes were content with their lives because they did not migrate to the cities. They lived and worked on the land where they had grown up: 'ihren vorherbestimmten bleibenden Stand haben sie dort, wo diese Linie die Peripherie der Erde schneidet: nämlich in dem Stück Erde, aus dem sie und für das sie geboren sind.'⁴¹⁷ This viewpoint is reflected in Otto Modersohn's work who never painted the faces of the farmers but depicted them as small figures in harmonious colours which matched the landscape they were depicted in, as already seen in his painting *Sturm im Teufelsmoor* [Fig. 14].

⁴¹⁴ W. H. Riehl, *Deutsches Volkscharakter*, Leipzig, D.U 23 (In Summa: der Bauer bewahrt durch die Form seiner Arbeit sich selber als einen Stammhalter unserer echten nationalen Altertümer in Stamm und Siedelung, Sitte und Sprache. Er zeigt uns die Grundzüge der Volkspersönlichkeit ruhend, gebunden, im naiven Instinkte waltend. Und diese Ruhe ist nicht tot; sie ist nur vergleichsweise Ruhe; denn unter der scheinbar erstarrten Hülle der Bauernsitte webt dennoch wiederum ein eises Leben und schiebt ganz stille auch diese beharrende Volksgruppe vorwärts.)

⁴¹⁵ M. Hoelzl, G. Ward (Eds.) *Religion and Political Thought*, London, 2006, 176

⁴¹⁶ F. Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, London, 1974, 147.

⁴¹⁷ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 125.

(ii) Langbehn's stimulus for *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, the Renaissance of Dutch cultural capital

It is significant that the publication of Langbehn's book coincided with a Renaissance in the arts in the Netherlands. Pride in Dutch literature, theatre and painting was at a high ebb and so was national feeling. This made the author's portrayal of Rembrandt as a northern cult hero all the more relevant at the turn of the century.

In the decade before Langbehn wrote his book, the Movement of the Eighties took hold of Dutch literature. The chief exponents of the literary group were Louis Couperus (1863-1923) and Wilhelm Kloos (1857-1938). The group broke away from the old school of literature and in 1881 author Marcellus Emants (1848-1923) published a treatise openly attacking the old order. During the decades preceding Langbehn's publication, Dutch painting also underwent a revival in the shape of The Hague School. The Hague School had considerable success during the 1870s and 1880s in Europe and America with their landscapes of the woods and river in Gelderland.⁴¹⁸ The Hague's currently most famous artist, Vincent van Gogh, was also 'discovered' in the 1890s. After his death his exhibitions toured Europe, including Germany. It was in this climate of a distinguished Dutch avant-garde, artistic flair that Langbehn published his book on Rembrandt.

(iii) Rembrandt the Dutch icon and Langbehn's longing for German cultural icons

⁴¹⁸ G. Pollock, *The Hague School*. London. Royal Academy, 'The Burlington Magazine', Vol. 125, No. 963, 1993, 376.

The authors of *Images of the Nation: Different Meanings of Dutchness* articulate the national identity which went hand in hand with Dutch painting. Alison McQueen explained that tourism to the Netherlands in the 19th century helped to stimulate a market for Dutch art.⁴¹⁹ Not even Fritz Stern has articulated that the appeal for Rembrandt's work, as expressed by Langbehn, was partly due to the Dutch Revival and surge in Dutch nationalism around 1900. It will be shown here that the appeal of Rembrandt for Langbehn was a symbol of Dutch nationalism precisely because the Netherlands' identity was secure.

The beauty of Rembrandt's work, according to Langbehn, was that he was able to appreciate and understand his own environment. He was able to develop his own style, rather than relying on a stock of motifs expounded from the well-trodden path of the Grand Tour.⁴²⁰ The indication that the artist never left his native Holland made it easier for the Dutch to name him as their national icon, since it was assumed that his work lacked foreign influence. The ease with which Langbehn was able to latch on to Rembrandt as a Dutch national hero is partly explained by the fact that the Netherlands had been functioning coherently as a country for 150 years before Germany. Dutch national identity was more compelling than its German counterpart. Langbehn's adoption of Rembrandt as his own northern icon was due to the fact that nationalism in the Netherlands was solid and genuine. The enormous wealth created during the mercantilist era during the Dutch Golden Age gave its citizens something to look back on in admiration at a time when nationalism was a growing force in Europe. As the author on Dutch history, Michael North, observes:

⁴¹⁹ A. McQueen, *The Rise of the Cult of Rembrandt*, 33.

⁴²⁰ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 19.

In the seventeenth century the Netherlands was a country of superlatives: every year 70,000 pictures were painted, 110,000 lengths of cloth were produced and the gross national income was 200 million guilders. Dutch society was the most urbanized in Europe and the country had the highest literacy rate; an unusually large number of people owned works of art, the social infrastructure was well developed and various religious beliefs were tolerated. These are just some of the characteristics that made the Netherlands so unique during this period.⁴²¹

The publication of *Rembrandt als Erzieher* coincided with a fiercely intense period of nationalism in the Netherlands around 1900. Several factors influenced Dutch nationalism including military victories in The Lombok Expedition (1894-95) in the East Indies, and in The Boer War in South Africa. From a wider perspective, with the accession of Queen Wilhelmina, the institution of the monarchy became a source of national pride.⁴²² Despite the fact that Holland was formally unified at much the same time as Germany it had been coherently functioning as a single country with a central government since the eighteenth century.

(iv) A backdrop to Langbehn's Rembrandt, the German admiration for Netherlandish art from the 17th century to the 20th century.

The Worpswede's attachment to the Rembrandt book and its success lay in the fact that its publication coincided with an artistic and literary revival in the Netherlands. As a result Rembrandt became a cultural icon. German artists felt a

⁴²¹M. North, *Art and Commerce in the Dutch Golden Age*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1997, 2.

⁴²² Ed. A Galema, B Henkes and H. te Velde, *Images of the Nation: Different Meanings of Dutchness*, Amsterdam, 1993.

special affinity for the great Dutch artists such as Rembrandt. As northern artists they recognised the flatness of the landscape as comparable to their own. The Director of the Berlin Academy, Max Liebermann, maintained it was the landscape itself, which made Dutch landscape painting so unique,

Holland has rightly been called the land of painting par excellence and it is no accident that Rembrandt was a Hollander. The mists that rise up from the water, enveloping everything as if in a transparent veil, give the landscape its peculiar picturesqueness; the damp atmosphere softens the hardness of the outlines and gives the sky its soft silvery- grey tone; the bright local colours are united, the black of the shadows is dissolved in colourful reflections: everything seems to be bathed in light and air. And then there is that flatness, which lets the eye wander unimpeded for miles and seems made for painting with its gradations from the strongest green in the foreground to the most delicate tones on the horizon.⁴²³

Liebermann's description of the particularities of a Dutch landscape naturally evokes his painting *Die Netzflickerinnen* of c. 1887-9 [Fig. 15]. The painting possesses the soft, silvery grey tones which Liebermann attributed to the Dutch landscape. The wide skylines were typical of Rembrandt's work as in *Landscape with Stone Bridge* of c. 1638 [Fig. 16]. The vast skyline depicted over the river covers three quarters of the painting. The greys and blues of the sky blend into each other, harmoniously reflecting Liebermann's sentiment that the moistness in the atmosphere softens the outlines of the landscape.

⁴²³ Ed. Ronald de Leeuw, John Sillevis, Charles Dumas, *The Hague School: Dutch Masters of the nineteenth century*, Grand Palais, Paris, 1983, p. 116. (cited after: S. Fischer, *Max Liebermann, Die Phantasie in der Malerei; Schriften und Reden*, Frankfurt am Main, 1978, 83-84.)

(v) Dutch artistic Influence on the Worpsweders

The Rembrandt book appealed to the artists in the colony because they admired the Dutch artist, but as has been shown here, they very much valued contemporary Dutch art.

The particular affinity the Worpsweders had with the Northern School can be seen in their paintings. As described in what follows, Dutch landscape was comparable geographically to that of northern Germany, therefore the landscape painting of the Netherlands and northern Germany are both well matched. Geographically and artistically, then, landscape artists from northern Germany and the Netherlands naturally felt a keen affinity with one another. Logically, northern German landscape artists looked to the Netherlands' artists for inspiration rather than the Italians and the French with whom they had much less in common.

Contemporary monographs were keen to address the similarities between the Dutch and the Worpswede artists. Mackensen's *Worpsweder Madonna* of 1892 [Fig. 17] in particular appears to be largely based on the contemporary Dutch artist's work *The Cottage Madonna* of 1867 [Fig. 18] by Jozef Israëls. Rilke observed that the *Worpsweder Madonna* had a highly significant religious impact on him. For Rilke the image was one of great humanity.

It is a devotional image in Protestantism. Not the Madonna, but a mother; the mother of a human being who will smile; the mother of a human being

who will suffer; the mother of a human being who will die: the mother of a human being.⁴²⁴

The perceived worth of domestic normality was held in high regard by the Dutch and used the same iconography for domestic interiors as for common religious subjects.⁴²⁵ The Archbishop of Paris was impressed by the religious significance of the painting and called the Jewish artist 'a great Catholic.'⁴²⁶ Mackensen clearly used Israëls' painting as inspiration. It has a similar composition, a woman sitting feeding her child. The artist also used a similar palette to Israëls. They both used the traditional colours for the Madonna of red and blue. Mackensen used a more limited palette than Israëls to indicate the simplicity of the intrinsic moral values of family life. The composition is stripped down to its core elements, set against the plain backdrop of a grey sky and thus Mackensen increases the painting's religious fervour. The viewpoint is depicted from beneath the subject, so the viewer looks up to the painting which is again a reference to the painting's devotional status.

The German genre painters offer an illustration of their subject, looking more for the anecdotal, the characteristic chance occurrence. But Israël abandons all detail, looking for the typical, the poetic synthesis instead of the reasoned analysis.⁴²⁷ It seems obvious then that the Worpswede artists had a particular lure towards Dutch landscapes - this only served to heighten the appeal of the Rembrandt book.

⁴²⁴ Kreul (ed), *Worpswede. Rilke*. 2003, Bremen, 46 (Es ist ein Devotionsbild des Protestantismus. Keine Madonna, eine Mutter; die Mutter eines Menschen, der lächen wird; die Mutter eines Menschen, der leiden wird; die Mutter eines Menschen, der sterben wird: die Mutter eines Menschen.)

⁴²⁵ R. Leeuw, J. Sillevius, C. Dumas (Eds.), *The Hague School*, London, 1983, 191

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 191

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 94

(vi) Rembrandt as a national icon

Rembrandt's paintings constitute one of the most disputed bodies of work in the history of Western art. Not much was known about his life in the eighteenth century. However, after evaluating his paintings, biographers pronounced him technically incompetent, illiterate, lowborn and vulgar.⁴²⁸ Nevertheless, by the nineteenth-century Rembrandt was seen as a national hero.⁴²⁹ In 1852, the Dutch erected a monument to their artist in Amsterdam in the now *Rembrandtplatz*. Langbehn used the myth of Rembrandt as a self-taught artist, a non-conformist, an anti-Catholic and a man of the people, although this was not his original concept. This assertion had its roots in French literature during the first half of the century.⁴³⁰ Just as Langbehn had used the artist to champion his own politics and values so the French had done sixty years previously. They both heralded the artist for the same reasons but for different ends. For the French he stood against the academy as a Republican.⁴³¹ For Langbehn, he stood in opposition to the French academy as well as being a German national symbol, Rembrandt represented the epitome of the northern school for Langbehn. The assertion that Rembrandt had in fact been taught to paint and had owned a vast collection of southern as well as northern works of art⁴³² was largely ignored by both schools of thought. By the middle of the nineteenth century it became an adage in French literature that *Rembrandt only had one master and that was Rembrandt*.⁴³³ The Langbehn book thus resonated with the French school of

⁴²⁸ A. McQueen, *The Rise of the Cult of Rembrandt*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2003, 34-36.

⁴²⁹ McQueen, *The Rise of the Cult of Rembrandt*, 86-100.

⁴³⁰ *Reinventing the Biography, Creating the Myth: Rembrandt in Nineteenth-Century France*, A. McQueen, 'Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art', Vol. 28, No. 3 (200-2001), 163-180.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 169

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 168

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 167

thought with one development; everything that Rembrandt was for Langbehn, his genius, his individuality and his humanity was born out of the fact that he was a northern artist. Moreover, for Langbehn, Rembrandt was a symbol of antithesis to modern culture. Rembrandt was so prominent in Mackensen's consciousness, that when he wrote to Modersohn about his travels in Lower Saxony, he compared what he had seen there to Rembrandt's painting:

Old, wonderfully formed trunks, shining silver from out of the dark silhouettes; a water ditch with the clear reflection of a bright red roof and the clear, transparent evening air, just as Rembrandt painted them at his castle on the hill.⁴³⁴

By fleeing the academies, working in the countryside and by extolling the individual characteristics of Worpswede, the artists attempted to attain a national status for Germany in the way Rembrandt had for the Netherlands.

(vii) Conclusion: The Worpswede artists' literal answer of Langbehn's request

Until now no author has written specifically about the Rembrandt book and used it as a source from which to compare the premises behind the Worpswede paintings in the pre-war years and Langbehn's ideas on northern identity or indeed the book's influence on authors on the Worpswede artists. The book's often convoluted stream of consciousness, repetitive nature and its connection with Nazi ideology have meant that art historians have only cited it and given it no closer scrutiny. It has been shown here that the Worpswede artists gave Langbehn what he wanted, a local, individual art form which expounded the

⁴³⁴ Bohlmann-Modersohn, *Otto Modersohn*, 2005, 26 (Alte, wunderbar geformte Stämme, silbern aus den dunklen Silhouetten herausleuchtend; ein Wassergraben, in dem sich klar ein leuchtend rotes Dach und eine helle, durchsichtige Abendluft spiegelte, wie sie Rembrandt auf seinem Schloß auf dem Berge gemalt hat.)

Protestantism of the north.⁴³⁵ They answered his call precisely for an art form which reflected what he saw as typical of northern Germany. In the main body of the Worpswede work the artists painted the rural poor as faceless, characterless farmers whose hard graft was as enduring as the changing of the seasons. Again, this view of the northern farmer as subordinate, hard working, and most of all, content, was extolled by Langbehn to be a symbol of national pride.⁴³⁶

The artists repeated themes such as lines of birches, flat fields and narrow canals in an attempt to classify these characteristics as not only typical of northern Germany, but specifically of Worpswede. This concept was reinforced by the repeated images of thatched roofed mud huts to enforce a sense of what came to be seen as Worpswede's identity.

Finally, it has been found to be compelling here that the artists used a northern style which was naturalistic and largely influenced by contemporary Dutch artists. Langbehn had argued that northern artists needed to paint not only what was northern in their representations of landscapes but in an artistically northern style.⁴³⁷ Fritz Stern has shown, as previously mentioned, that Paul Legarde and Arthur Moeller-Bruck also expounded this ethos in the 1890s, stressing the importance of northern culture and environment to German identity. Langbehn took this concept and expanded upon it by focusing on Rembrandt.

⁴³⁵ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 37

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 122-123.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

The Worpswede artists developed Langbehn's ethos further. The authors of the monographs on Worpswede were also keen to use their work as an answer to Langbehn's call for what he defined as German art. Even art critics showed that they shared Langbehn's desire for an art form that was typically northern under the author's definition. However, for all of Langbehn's resistance against modern, industrialised Germany, he didn't offer any logical ways to counteract it. His book, at the very least, is an emotional tirade against modern civilization.

There was, however, one artist in the group who addressed social issues directly in Worpswede. In the next section titled *Beyond Langbehn: Heinrich Vogeler, a force for social change and capitalist production in Lower Saxony*, it will be clear that instead of dismissing modern society, Vogeler embraced it yet was still able to promote a sense of 'northernness' in his work.

Marketing Worpswede:

(i) Heinrich Vogeler, a force for social change and capitalist production in Lower Saxony

It is unclear whether Heinrich Vogeler was driven by a desire to make money or by his ethical principles. He was involved in improving the quality of life for the Worpsweders whilst sustaining his own lavish lifestyle in doing so. Before going into a more detailed analysis of Vogeler's work, closer scrutiny will be given to academic interest with a social approach. Karl-Robert Schütze has pioneered the research on Vogeler. Schütze is the author of *Heinrich Vogeler, Worpswede: Leben und architektonisches Werk* but there is also a particularly relevant chapter

in the book titled *Kulturgeschichte eines Künstlerdorfes Worpswede*. The chapter of interest is titled *Ein Dorf wird schön*. The authors, Guido Boulboulé and Michael Zeiss, argue that tourists came to Worpswede as soon as the first artists arrived. A few years later there was a *Verschönerungsverein* established in the village to regulate the architecture, layout and garden design to preserve the character of the village.⁴³⁸ Their theory is that while Vogeler was the head of the *Verschönerungsverein* committee, he only intended to keep the village clean and preserve its character while erecting benches, walk ways and sign posts. It is proposed here that Vogeler's actively sought to bring an art-buying public into Worpswede and was also involved in the 'back to the land' movement, which sought to return factories and workers to the countryside.⁴³⁹

Before the artists came to the village it was similar to any of the other colonized moors in northern Germany.⁴⁴⁰ What made the village particular was the artists' influence: the artists created an identity for the village through their paintings and marketing. Being on the committee, the artists were able to preserve the identity they had created for the village. The artists repeated themes in their paintings in order to create a sense of 'authentic' regional identity. Apart from executing art works, Vogeler made direct/practical changes to the village in order to heighten its attractiveness to tourists. Karl Robert Schütze's work comes from an architectural perspective and will be used here as a starting point to examine Vogeler and his motivations. Schütze's MA thesis *Heinrich Vogeler: Architektur in Niedersachsen* gives an excellent biographical history of Vogeler's

⁴³⁸ Boulboulé and Zeiss, *Worpswede*, 90

⁴³⁹ K. R. Schütze, *Vogeler*, 1975, 12.

⁴⁴⁰ Boulboulé and Zeiss, *Worpswede*, 7

involvement in associations and his architectural work in the region. The author concentrates on his own empirical research and does not analyse Vogeler's intentions. Discussing the establishment of the magazine *Niedersachsen* (which Vogeler helped to found) he notes the paper's aim: 'Neubelebung der niedersächsischen Bauweise und Schutz des Landschaftsbildes. Als weiterer Programmpunkt wurden zur Verbreitung der Schönheiten der engeren niedersächsischen Heimat die Herstellung von Farbdrucken als Wandschmuck'.⁴⁴¹

The primary sources, which are relied upon here, include Otto Modersohn's diary, Vogeler's letters, the *Niedersachsen* journal and contemporary literature on the Garden City Movement. These sources will be drawn upon to reveal how the artists were involved in more than just painting landscape scenes of Worpswede but physically changed the face of the village.

(ii) Barkenhoff:⁴⁴² A *Gesamtkunstwerk* and the ultimate marketing tool

In 1895 Vogeler bought a dilapidated farmhouse with a plot of land in Worpswede [Fig. 19]. He combined his skills as an artist, interior decorator, architect and furniture designer, to create his Jugendstil house which became known as Barkenhoff [Fig. 20]. His promotion of the colony as a place of intellectual and cultural worth is nowhere more obvious than in the paintings of this house. He believed that he had created utopia in Worpswede, referring to

⁴⁴¹ K. R. Schütze, *Heinrich Vogeler: Architektur in Niedersachsen*, Berlin, 1975, 31.

⁴⁴² N.b. sometimes this word is spelt with a double ff and sometimes a single f by Vogeler, today a double ff is used by the Barkenhoff Stiftung, which is how it will be spelt here.

his house as a castle.⁴⁴³ His house became a focal point for the artists, who met regularly and discussed contemporary issues in art, religion and politics.⁴⁴⁴ Vogeler's most acclaimed painting of his house is entitled *Sommerabend* of 1905 [Fig. 21]. The painting was exhibited at the Oldenburg exhibition, in the same year as it was completed in 1905, at the height of his career. By this time the group had experienced several significant departures and had entered a different phase to include women and writers. This painting was an announcement that the *Worpswede Vereinigung* had disbanded and this was the group which would take its place. In essence it was a piece of propaganda, celebrating Vogeler's house as the centre of artistic thought in Worpswede. The bench on which Agnes Wulf sits bears the gold lettering *Barke*. The rest of the word is obscured by the tree in the foreground but is obviously the word *Barkenhof*. At the bottom right corner of the painting is the stamp which Vogeler imprinted onto all his furniture, his initials H.V. inside a circle. He explains in a letter to a client: 'my entire soul lives here and after three months I cannot do it anymore, I must go home to my *Barkenhof* [*sic.*]; I believe when you see my house you will immediately understand this feeling, a part of me stays there.'⁴⁴⁵ The artist presented his house as the heart of his artistic inspiration. The painting of his house, *Sommerabend*, was intended for display at the North West German exhibition, which took place in Oldenburg. Those who submitted their work to the regional museum had to be based in North West Germany. Given that such criteria had never before been requested⁴⁴⁶ the heightened sense of interest in contemporary regional concerns is clear. Vogeler was the only artist invited to

⁴⁴³ H. Vogeler, *Erinnerungen*, Berlin, 1952, 94.

⁴⁴⁴ (eds.), G. Busch and L. Reinken *Paula Modersohn Becker's the Letters and journals*, 'Worpswede, September 3, 1900,' New York, 1983, 198

⁴⁴⁵ Worpswede Stiftung, *Letter to Hans Bethge from Heinrich Vogeler*, end of 1899, Worpswede,

⁴⁴⁶ Schütze, *Heinrich Vogeler*, 1975, 32.

exhibit at the traditionally industrial display.⁴⁴⁷ He was given a room to himself, which was packed with his paintings, furniture and architectural designs. *Sommerabend*, of 1905, [Fig. 21] with its perfectly manicured trees and lush blooming flowers is a reflection of Vogeler's utopia. This was rooted in a political Marxist ideology that pre-empted the Expressionists version of utopia.⁴⁴⁸ As his self-conscious marketing strategy, Barkenhoff came to be a 'brand-name'; Vogeler would stamp its image on all his formal letters, under which was written *Barkenhoff, Worpswede*.⁴⁴⁹ [Fig. 22]

Vogeler presented his house as a utopia and yet used it as a showpiece through his paintings and his stamp to demonstrate his personal artistic abilities. Vogeler's engagement with such modern commercial tactics to promote his self-interests and gain exposure seems in stark contrast to Langbehn's tirade against modern culture. On closer inspection Vogeler took advantage of the contemporary desire at the time to find an art form that was regional and translated comfortably into a multi-national identity and continued to market it as such.

In his frequent letters to contemporary eminent critics, Vogeler portrays the colony as an eclectic troupe of eccentric artists, again with his house as the creative hub.

Klara Westhoff, Paula Becker, Otto Modersohn, Martha and I lie nearly every day now on the ice. In the evenings, we sit, dead tired around the

⁴⁴⁷ R. Schütze, *Heinrich Vogeler*, MA Thesis, Technical University Berlin, 1975.

⁴⁴⁸ S. West, *The Visual Arts in Germany 1890-1937*, Manchester, 2000, 165

⁴⁴⁹ E.g. see letter to Dr. Pauli, 28.11.1913 from Heinrich Vogeler, at the Bremen Kunsthalle.

steaming hot punch at Barkenhoff, sometimes dressed in the strangest costumes when one or other of us has made acquaintance with the cold water and a respectable farmwoman has given us one of her skirts. Our Christmas festivities were very nice; 50 lights burned on the tree in my white vestibule and the girls were all dressed so fantastically; and Otto Modersohn, dressed in a long red robe and smoking a thick pipe that befogged the room with a blue smoke, looked like a holy king from the Occident. We have developed such a close family life here.⁴⁵⁰

By 1900 Vogeler's Barkenhoff was alive with the cultural interplay of writers, musicians and artists. In this letter to Alfred Heymel, a wealthy art connoisseur, the artist recounts a world of fantasy and costume from the lavish parties he hosted from his country estate in Worpswede. In the above letter, Vogeler calls his quirky group of artists and dilettante, 'a close family.' The artist self-consciously describes his artistic circle as a closed fantastical world of costumed artists, comparing his colleague to a Holy King, as Otto Modersohn sat with his pipe and gown in the evening at his house. Vogeler's comment is also probably a reference to his painting *Die drei heligie Könige*, of 1897, [Fig. 23] where he depicted the three Kings in luxurious gowns and colourful hats. The central figure which stoops in the foreground is also cloaked and bearded, just as

⁴⁵⁰Barkenhoff-Stiftung, H. Vogeler to A. W. Heymel, 02/01/1901, (Worpswede. Klara Westhoff, Paula Becker, Otto Modersohn, Martha und ich, wir liegen jetzt fast den ganzen Tag auf dem Eise. Sitzen Abends todmüde um den dampfenden Punsch auf dem Barkenhoff, manchmal schon in der seltsamsten Weise kostümiert [sic], wenn der eine oder anderer Bekanntschaft mit dem kalten Wasser gemacht hatte und eine biedere Bäurin ihre Röcke zur Verfügung gestellt hatte. Sehr nett war auch unser Weihnachtsfest; oben auf meiner Weissen Diele brannten 50 Lichter auf einem Baum und die Mädchen waren alle so phantastisch angezogen, auch Otto Modersohn in einem langen roten Gewande mit seiner dicken Pfeife, die das Zimmer in einen blauen Qualm hüllte, sah aus wie ein Heiliger König aus dem Abendlande. Hier hat sich jetzt überhaupt so ein enges Familienleben entwickelt.)

Vogeler describes Modersohn in his letter. The setting is identifiably Worpswede with the thatched cottages in the background and dotted with birches. The Kings' smart outfits are offset by characteristic Worpswede clogs. Since Vogeler was aware that Heymel was a man of influence in the art world, he was attempting to show that, despite the fragmentation of the *Worpswede Künstler Vereinigung*, there was still a coherent creative group functioning in Worpswede.

(iii) *Verschönerungs-Verein Worpswede* and The Building Commission

By 1900 there was already a tourist guide operating from Bremen taking tourists to Worpswede.⁴⁵¹ The projected idealistic image of the village did not match up to reality, as one such tourist, Johan Gerdes wrote following his visit. He was mocking the saturated tourist attraction the village had become.

Alongside the bushes, the Worpsweder Nature Beautification Club carries out its bench-donating activities. Should I praise the club for this? Just think: in about five square-shaped areas cut out of the bushes there are, to the left, to the right and at the back, long wooden seats with enough space for at least 60 people. What a sight it must be to see fifty or sixty people admiring Worpswede at the same time from out of five or six arbors. The locals would never sit in there in droves ⁴⁵²

The author found himself in a group of fifty or sixty people, all eager to absorb the idyllic atmosphere!

⁴⁵¹ Zeiss and Boulboulle, *Worpswede*, 90.

⁴⁵² G. Boulboulle and M. Zeiss, *Worpswede: Kulturgeschichte eines Künstlerdorfes*, DuMont Buchverlag, Köln, 1989, 90 after K. Schütze, *Heinrich Vogeler und – Worpswede*, Leben und architektonisches Werk, Berlin, 1980, 26. (Am Busche entlang entfaltet der Worpsweder Verschönerungsverein seine Bänke stiftende Tätigkeit. Ob ich ihn deshalb loben soll? Man denke: in etwa fünf quadratischen Einschnitten in den Busch stehen rechts und links und hinten lange Brettersitze, Platz für mindestens 60 Personen. Was für einen Anblick müßte es geben, aus fünf oder sechs Lauben von fünfzig bis sechzig Personen gleichzeitig Worpswede bewundern zu sehen. Einheimische werden sich wohl nie in Rudeln darinein setzen)

In 1903 Modersohn and Vogeler, among others, established a new *Verschönerungsverein* for Worpswede, under the pretext that they needed to control the impact that the tourists were having on the village. They recognised the detrimental effect that the tourists were having. The opening words of the association's statute state: 'Der am 25. September 1893 gegründete Verein bezweckt Worpswede und Umgegend in seiner niedersächsischen Eigenart zu erhalten und zu pflegen.' As previously noted, authors such as Michael Zeiss and Karl-Robert Schütze concur that the artists' motives sprang from a genuine desire to curtail the negative impact of tourism and delay modernizing forces. They associated the artists' move from the industrialised cities to the countryside as a complete rejection of modernity. However, this is an oversimplification. It will be argued that the artists' motives were primarily based on an attempt to control the image of Worpswede and therefore heighten its appeal to tourists. The *Verschönerungsverein* allowed the artists to make the village more amenable to its tourists but through the Building Commission, with Vogeler at its head, the artists made some of their most significant changes to the village.

In 1905 the artists Karl Krummacher and Hans am Ende, directed by Heinrich Vogeler, established a Building Commission with the purpose: 'selected to process requirements for local building works'.⁴⁵³ The artists had central roles within the two different committees of the Building Commission and the *Verschönerungsverein*. They supposedly strove to turn Worpswede into a village

⁴⁵³ Schütze, *Heinrich Vogeler*, 1975, 19

of traditional character, whilst promoting the village as a tourist attraction. This dual purpose was written into the opening lines of the Building Commission's statement of intent.

Under the aegis of the Building Commission, the artists regulated the construction of new buildings as well as overseeing renovations in Worpswede. Inhabitants who wished to renovate their houses were sponsored to do so by the Building Commission in a manner that the commission deemed characteristic of the area. One such case was Johannes Murken who was given the reasonable sum of 15 Marks by the commission to redesign his windows with new, small windowpanes.⁴⁵⁴ Builders, universities and colleges were offered etchings by the artists in the colony to inspire their architecture.

From 1905 the Building Commission began to work in collaboration with the Niedersächsischen Verein. Vogeler's ubiquitous presence in Lower Saxony was also to be found here, since he was also a founding member of the *Niedersachsen Verein*. Thus he was able to extend artistic influence.

Through this larger association Vogeler invited the art critic Karl Schaefer and the architect and social reformer, Hugo Wagner, to give a lecture in Worpswede.⁴⁵⁵ They gave out free architectural drawings as suggestions for new buildings. Schütze has shown that the lecture itself was later published by Hans am Ende in the *Bremer Tageblatt*.⁴⁵⁶ They stressed that where possible

⁴⁵⁴ Schütze, *Vogeler* 1975, 20.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

builders should use local materials. They also suggested that builders use colours that the artists deemed as typical for the area. Perhaps most importantly the Building Commission recommended that any new buildings should be built as wide as they were high and that the exterior of the house should reflect the interior in its layout.⁴⁵⁷ In this way, the newly built houses would emulate the character of the moor colonists' cottages.

Even though the artists preached the importance of traditional methods, as Langbehn did, they were not anti-modern in their actions. The members of the association wanted locals to keep their thatched roofs in order to preserve the character of the village and the creation of a chemical which would prevent the burning of the straw would encourage locals to keep their quaint rooftops. Hans am Ende tested the chemical on the 14 of June 1908 in order to prove to the association that it worked, so that they could endorse it to local inhabitants.⁴⁵⁸ The biggest departure from Langbehn's anti-modernist philosophy, however, was the construction of the train line through Worpswede and its neighbouring villages to Bremen. There can be no doubt that Langbehn believed that the city was morally corrupt and that Germany's farmers lived a purer existence.⁴⁵⁹ However, the author did not tackle how exactly to address this issue; Vogeler and his troupe of artists and architects used their knowledge of the garden city movement to reverse this order.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁵⁸ Schütze, *Vogeler*, 1975, 25.

⁴⁵⁹ Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 124.

(iv) How the artist's controlled how Worpswede and the county was perceived through the publication *Niedersachsen*

As a state, Lower Saxony was a modern, Prussian, and ultimately artificial construct established after wars against Denmark, Austria and France (1864-1871).⁴⁶⁰ Lower Saxony had formerly been a series of small states but was united under Bismarck. Even after the establishment of this state the region included independent states, such as, Oldenburg, Bremen and Braunschweig.⁴⁶¹ After 1871 Lower Saxony was a state governed by Prussia, a highly artificial construct itself, whose identity was far from traditional time-honoured.⁴⁶²

Worpswede was a small village, whose economy lay in peat. It did not have the long cherished history comparable to Bavaria's market town Dachau. Therefore identities in the newly created Lower Saxony and the little known village of Worpswede, were easier for the artists to more clearly define for their own ends. For the artists and their public, their work represented the individual character of Germany. This was very important for Langbehn. The author felt that the individual character of Germany was being threatened by the newly established Prussian states or the faceless capitalism. By using the place name *Niedersachsen*, however, the artists constantly stressed their association with northern Germany placing regional identity at the heart of their work.

Through their contacts in Bremen, most significantly through Gustav Pauli (Director of the Bremen Kunsthalle), the artists recognised the power of the

⁴⁶⁰ D. Buse, *The Regions of Germany*, London, 2005, 115

⁴⁶¹ Buse, *The Regions of Germany*, 115

⁴⁶² C. Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 2006, London, xiii.

press and launched their own regional publication and named it *Niedersachsen*. Vogeler acted as deputy director of the publication and was a founding member. Like most regional publications of the time it documented everything from traditional regional furniture, to various types of indigenous flora and fauna, to instructions on how to protect your thatched roof. It clearly placed value on the singularity of the area.

The *Niedersachsen* journal, however, had a significantly more artistic interest. Not only did the Worpswede artists, principally Vogeler, illustrate the journal with graphic designs [Fig. 24], but there were also numerous articles on art. Frequent subjects included other artists' colonies in Lower Saxony, Mecklenberg, *Heimat* museums, and, of course, the latter day artistic luminary, Rembrandt. As Rilke and Langbehn had done before, the journal praises Rembrandt for not leaving his homeland.

Nearly every young painter from Holland went to Italy to appropriate for himself the spirit of the Renaissance. Rembrandt is rooted like an oak in the earth of Holland. Never in his life did he aspire to see and paint in a foreign manner.⁴⁶³

The author directly compliments the book *Rembrandt als Erzieher*. Furthermore, in the launch publication of *Niedersachsen* three themes are repeatedly expressed: art, nationalism and landscape. One of the opening articles deliberates over the aforementioned lecture given by Dr. Karl Schaefer in Worpswede.

⁴⁶³ *Niedersachsen*, Nr. 20, 1906, 494. (Fast jeder junge Maler Hollands wanderte nach Italien, den Geist der Renaissance sich anzueignen. Rembrandt wurzelt eichenfest in holländischer Erde. Nie in seinem Leben hat er in welcher Weise zu sehen und zu malen getrachtet.)

Using a great number of photographs, the speaker now showed his listeners the astonishing diversity of form among German farmhouses, which really do reflect the German character and, by showing many examples and counter-examples, the speaker finally explained the unique character of our farmhouses and our landscape in Lower Saxony.⁴⁶⁴

The artists and their circle of like-minded contacts in Bremen therefore used the publication as a way in which to circulate their ideas on art and identity to a wider audience. In the first issue of the publication those who subscribed to the journal were listed alongside their profession.⁴⁶⁵ This showed that the readership tended to be middle class professionals.

An author of another article in *Niedersachsen*, compliments the farm houses in a neighbouring town to Worpswede, Braunschweig. The author claimed that the houses were made of natural materials, such as straw, wood and mud and therefore so well camouflaged with their landscape that they were often only distinguishable by the chimney smoke coming out of the top of the buildings.⁴⁶⁶ The author writes that one should appreciate the harmony between these old houses and their natural surroundings. He writes that there is much to learn from these farmhouses. Our parents and grandparents lived their peaceful lives there but he laments that this glory is coming to an end as the surrounding trees are being felled for fuel⁴⁶⁷. This was the ideal which those from the

⁴⁶⁴ H. Pfeiffer (ed.), *Niedersachsen*, Bremen, No. 11, 1906. (An der Hand zahlreicher Lichtbilder zeigte der Redner seinen Zuhörern nun die staunenswerte Vielgestaltigkeit des deutschen Bauernhauses, die so recht eine Widerspiegelung deutschen Wesens ist, und an vielen Beispielen und Gegenbeispielen wurde endlich die Eigenart unseres niedersächsischen Bauernhauses und unserer Landschaft erläutert.)

⁴⁶⁵ *Niedersachsen*, Jg. 11, No. 10, 15th February 1906.

⁴⁶⁶ G.B., *Niedersachsen*, Praktischer Heimatschutz, Bauernhäuser von Braunschweig, Jr., 11, No.7, January 1906, 136.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Verschönerungsverein and its sister organisations strove for. They desired a synthesis between nature and the built environment. In contrast to the author, signed as G.B., Vogeler did not intend that Worpswede should be locked in a vacuum away from modernism. He wished to preserve certain aspects of the village while simultaneously marketing it. The following section will expand on the way in which the artists' colonies involve themselves with modern culture for their own ends.

(v) The changing face of Worpswede: Worpswede as a tourist attraction

A fellow member of the group also endorsed the colony when he wrote in one of the most widely read art journals of the day. In *Die Kunst Für Alle* Fritz Overbeck wrote

Worpswede is a very humble little village situated between Bremen and Hamburg in an area whose natural charms are not mentioned at all by Bädcker as far as I know. And he is right, as there are no mountains there of so and so many metres high, whose peak offers visitors the pleasure of a 'panoramic view'; nor are their woods penetrated by well-tended pathways and dotted with benches upon which a nature lovers' club rest; nor are there lovely lakes which invite the visitor to boat parties in the light of the moon, nor any of those adornments that an area needs to be awarded the epithet 'beautiful' (a word which has recently started to go into disrepute). [...] in short, if a summer visitor somehow hoped till now to find a refuge there, then he was mistaken.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁸ F. Overbeck, 'Ein Brief aus Worpswede', *Kunst für Alle*, XI 1895/6, 20. (Worpswede ist ein sehr bescheidenes Örtchen, zwischen Bremen und Hamburg gelegen, in einer Gegend, deren landschaftliche Reize Bädcker, soviel mir bekannt ist, mit keinem Worte Erwähnung thut. Und er thut recht daran, denn es giebt dort weder Berge von so und so viel tausend Metern

Overbeck observes the beauty of Worpswede in this passage as a natural idyllic place, but which was not yet a controlled environment (which it would later come to be). He suggests that the lack of regulation over the countryside made it more sublime. By the time that Overbeck came to write this piece in *Kunst für Alle* Worpswede was already well known to tourists. The village lies less than ten miles from Bremen and had had trade routes established with the city since the eighteenth century.⁴⁶⁹ Overbeck sought to present Worpswede as an Eden-like village, which he and his contemporaries had discovered. At the same time he suggested that Worpswede was an established tourist attraction receptive to visitors. This paradox continues in the literature by the artists. As Overbeck proposed, in the above statement, that the village was apparently an unworldly and simple place yet he advocated it as a village with an infrastructure amenable to tourists. Furthermore, the artists sought to improve this infrastructure and stamp their own seal upon it.

Neither Modersohn nor Overbeck distinguishes any particular unique features of the village. Two years after Overbeck had first started painting the village he introduced it to Otto Modersohn. He recorded his first impression in his diary in the following:

On Wednesday, 3 July 1889, I came to Worpswede with Fritz full of expectation. I saw almost immediately that I would not be disappointed. I found a very original village that left quite a strange impression on me;

Erhebung, deren Gipfel den Genuß eines 'Panoramas' bieten, weder Wälder, durchzogen von sauber gehaltenen Wegen und gespickt mit Ruhebänken eines Verschönerungsvereines, weder liebliche Seen, die zu Kahnpartien im Mondschein Gelegenheit böten, noch all die andern Requisten, deren es bedarf, um einer Gegend das Epitheton 'schön' (das in solcher Verbindung neuerdings etwas in Mißkredit zu geraten anfängt) einzutragen. [...] kurz, wenn ein Sommerfrischler bis (*sic*) her etwa gehofft haben sollte, dort ein Asyl finden zu können, so hat er sich verrechnet.)

⁴⁶⁹ Boulboulle and Zeiss, *Worpswede*, 38

the hilly, sandy soil in the village itself, the large moss-covered thatched roofs and, to all sides (as far as the eye could see), everything was as wide and open as at the seaside. The very first evening was wonderful right away. We went out onto the meadows, and drove in a thick cloud of dust in vehicles loaded with hay to the village. Everyone looked at us in amazement.⁴⁷⁰

Modersohn's opening line shows that he was full of expectation for his first trip to Worpswede. The description of a village with sandy soil, thatched roofs and a flat landscape could have been seen in much of contemporary north Germany, as the journal *Niedersachsen* later pointed out.⁴⁷¹ The generic nature of the Worpswede landscape intrinsic to much of north Germany, unlike the volcanic lakes of the Eifel or the market town of Dachau, makes the artist's characterisation of the village all the more obvious. In the quote from Overbeck he describes the village as an 'Asyl' or 'sanctuary' as any place away from the city could be. Vogeler had openly criticized the village for lacking its own character and a central base.⁴⁷²

Worpswede did not have a long and cherished history. In this respect it was different to its Bavarian counterpart, Dachau, on which it was modelled. Dachau was a traditional market town dating back to the Middle Ages. It was complete with town hall and its own museum. Colonized as late as the beginning of the

⁴⁷⁰ Otto Modersohn Museum and Archive, Fischerhude, Otto Modersohn's diary, 3 July 1889. (Mittwoch, 3. Juli 1889 kam ich mit Fritz voller Erwartung in Worpswede an. Ich sah fast gleich, daß meine Erwartungen nicht gestäuscht waren. Ich fand ein höchst originelles Dorf, das auf mich einen durchaus fremdartigen Eindruck machte; der hügelige, sandige Boden im Sorfe selbst, die großen bemoosten Strohdächer, und nach allen Sieten (so viel man sehen konnte) alles so weit und groß wie am Meer. Der erste Abend war gleich ein köstlicher. Wir gingen auf die Weiden, in dichtem Staub fuhren mit Heu belande Wagen zum Dorfe. Alles sah uns erstaunt an.)

⁴⁷¹ *Niedersachsen* Jg 11, No. 7, 1906, 132-133.

⁴⁷² M. Zeiss, 1989, 58 cited after H. Vogeler, *Errinnerungen*, 130.

seventeenth century Worpswede was a village whose economy lay in selling turf for burning, although by the 1880s coal had superseded turf as a more efficient material.⁴⁷³ Consequently, the fen colonizers were idealized by the Worpswede artists as people who were living a time-honoured existence. Lured by the publicized image of Worpswede as a quaint village with the benefit of an artists' colony, it became a place for day-trippers to spend some time. By the turn of the century Worpswede had changed significantly and had become a standard destination for townsfolk.⁴⁷⁴

(vi) Vogeler's Garden City Movement in Worpswede: Vogeler's social directive

Vogeler's involvement in building houses, shops and a train line can be explained partly by his involvement in the Garden City Movement. At the turn of the century, Berlin was second only to New York for its severe overcrowding. Questions were being raised all over Europe about the mass migration of the rural population to the cities. The Garden City Movement, which originated in England, proposed that adequate housing should be provided in the countryside for those in the city to return 'back to the land'. The chairmen of the movement put the predicament in the following brutal terms:

The rural population is streaming ever faster and faster in the towns. The strongest and most healthy of parents migrating from the country to a London slum, cannot hope to bring up their child in the same conditions of health and strength which they have themselves enjoyed. Born into

⁴⁷³ Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature*, 2006, 146-7.

⁴⁷⁴ Boulboulle, Zeiss (eds.) *Worpswede*, 94.

evil surroundings, its physical and mental development is poisoned from the outset, and, remaining in those surroundings, the evils eats deeper and deeper into its being every year of its life. This child's children have not even the advantages their parents possessed, of a healthy father and mother. Born of debilitated parents, their start in life is even worse, and so it goes on from generation to generation.⁴⁷⁵

It was anticipated that industry would move with the workforce and that new factories would be established in rural areas. The primary objective of the movement was to restore the health of the population, the second was to lower rents and rates for business and workers by moving the labour force to the countryside.⁴⁷⁶

Montagu Harris suggested that adequate housing should have three essentials: draining, lighting and a water supply.⁴⁷⁷ The houses that Vogeler built had all three. Harris also recommended that there should be train lines built through the countryside to ensure that industry could bring its raw materials in and take the finished product out.⁴⁷⁸ Vogeler completed his train line from Bremen, to Worpswede and the neighbouring countryside on the eve of the First World War. There was of course another reason for Vogeler's persistence with building housing and the establishment of a train line. He wanted to create an identity for Worpswede and imprint his enduring legacy upon it.

⁴⁷⁵ G. Montagu Harris *The Garden City Movement*, London, Garden City Press, 1906, 20-21.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

The British Garden City Movement had many guises. Essentially though, it was a movement, which was a resistance against the negative effects of the Industrial Revolution on the countryside and the frippery and materialism of Victorian society. It was originally founded as *The Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society* in 1887. One powerful voice of the movement, John Ruskin, in the preface to his book of essays 'Unto This Last' bemoaned the materialism of society when he wrote:

It is, therefore, the manner and issue of consumption which are the real tests of production. Production does not consist in things laboriously made, but in things serviceably consumable; and the question for the nation is not how much labour it employs, but how much life it produces. For as consumption is the end and aim of production, so life is the end and aim of consumption. [...] I desire[...] to leave this one great fact clearly stated. THERE IS NO WEALTH BUT LIFE. Life, including all its powers of love, of joy and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal, and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others.⁴⁷⁹

Vogeler had a keen interest in the Garden City Movement and, indeed, published his work in the well-known art journal *The Studio*, a magazine which became known as the mouthpiece of the movement. There is a substantial overlap between Vogeler's actions and the Garden City Movement. He and his brother set

⁴⁷⁹ J. Ruskin, *Unto This Last*, London, 1860, Nelson, Lancs, 2000, xii-xiii.

up their own furniture shop, Vogeler designed social housing and was the architect of his own house and garden. In the following passage a member of the *Niedersachsen Verein* reveals that the movement was inspired by William Morris.

All over Germany, it is known that a movement is underway initiated by a certain Dr. Ernst Rudorff and continued by Schultze-Naumburg, with the aim of fighting against the disfigurement of our homeland in town and countryside and against the warts of industry; a movement to preserve down-to-earth building styles, folk art and our ethnic folklore, in short, it aims to campaign so that, to quote Morris, the earth, in this case the earth of Lower Saxony, in this case the earth of Lower Saxony will maintain its beauty. I listened, benevolent on the outside, amazed on the inside, to the excellent statements as, during my building inspection in Berlin, I had also never heard anything about this beneficial movement to protect our homeland.⁴⁸⁰

Vogeler and his contemporaries were influenced by the book *Das Englische Haus*, written by an attaché to the German Embassy who was based in London. *Das Englische Haus* was on the English Arts and Crafts Movement particularly influenced *Niedersachsen* from its publication in 1908 until the First World War. The author, Hermann Muthesius' principal understanding of the English movement was that the architecture of the house, garden and the interior furnishings should be united.⁴⁸¹ It was this philosophy of inclusion that Vogeler

⁴⁸⁰ Hugo Wagner, 19. (Allerorten in deutschen Landen sei bekanntlich eine Bewegung im Gange, die von einem gewissen Dr. Ernst Rudorff ausgehe und von Schultze=Naumburg weitergeführt werde und die darauf hinziele, die Verschandelung unserer Heimat in Stadt und Land und die Auswüchse der Industrie zu bekämpfen, bodenständige Bauweise, Volkskunst und urwüchsiges Volkstum zu pflegen, kurzum dafür einzutreten, daß, um mit Morris zu reden, der Erde, in diesem Falle der niedersächsischen Erde, in diesem Falle der niedersächsischen Erde ihre Schönheit erhalten werde. Ich hörte äußerlich wohlwollend, innerlich erstaunt die ausgezeichneten Darlegungen mit an; denn auf meiner Berliner Bauinspektion hatte ich unter anderem auch von dieser segensreichen Heimatschutz=Bewegung noch nie etwas vernommen.)

⁴⁸¹ J. B. Tankard, *Gardens of the Arts and Crafts Movement*, New York, 2004, 15.

and his colleagues adapted to the village of Worpswede and its neighbouring districts. Furthermore, ever concerned with the social question, the Garden City Movement appealed to the artists and architects since they hoped to make Lower Saxony a healthy environment for its inhabitants to work and live in. It was within this philosophy that Vogeler designed five workers's houses in the same street as his Barkenhoff. The houses were built as model social housing for the Garden City Movement.⁴⁸² Wagner and Vogeler agreed that Worpswede needed buildings which fitted into the same *heimatliche Bauweise* aesthetic, which mirrored the farm houses which were already there and did not jar with the landscape. The result was essentially small square houses with sloping roofs, which echoed the thatched cottages of the moor dwellers so often seen in the Worpswede paintings. Additionally, the houses shared the architectural style of Vogeler's own Barkenhoff. The artist used the same red tiles for the workers' houses as he did for his own house. This can be seen in his painting of Barkenhoff. The tiles were imbricated in the same fashion as Vogeler's house [Fig. 28]. Similarly, the houses were painted white, as is Vogeler's own house. The windows on the front of the workers' houses also echo Barkenhoff, as they both have wooden mullions on the windows. The windows are also the same rectangular shapes separated by muntins, as in the case of Barkenhoff. The two family houses for the workers share these same features but also a small round window within the gable on the front side of the house. Both types of houses feature a hip roof (or cottage roof) that has four pitched sides. Vogeler was not just building houses out of his desire for social reform. He was in fact building a village around his house in the style of his own house. Vogeler spent years

⁴⁸²Schütze, *Vogeler*, 1975, 64

perfecting the interior and exterior of his house. When tourists were to come to Worpswede after the turn of the century they would view Vogeler's house as emblematic of the Worpswede character.

(vii) Hugo Wagner (1873-1944): his synthesis of industry and the *Heimat* movement

Wagner was originally from Bremen but came to live in Worpswede, near Vogeler's Barkenhoff.⁴⁸³ It will be shown how the two worked together, sat on the same committees and lived opposite each other. Wagner's perspective on achieving a synthesis between traditional northern German identity and modern industry must have been of great significance to the artist. The men became friends and worked on building projects together both in Worpswede and Lower Saxony. Hugo Wagner was a social reformer and architect. In the factories that he designed, Wagner used traditional architectural styles combined with modern technology and attempted to create a synthesis between industry and *Heimatschutz* (literally meaning 'homeland protection').⁴⁸⁴ Hans am Ende and Hugo Wagner collaborated on a farm house Pavillion for the *Kaligesellschaft* for the *Deutsche Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft*.⁴⁸⁵ A model of the farmhouse was exhibited in Worpswede and was displayed as an example of a building which used modern materials yet remained in a traditional style which was sympathetic to the landscape it resided in.

⁴⁸³ N. Aschenbeck, *In Erster Linie Hausbau*, 2002, 111.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 12

⁴⁸⁵ Aschenbeck, *In Erster Linie Hausbau*, 2002, 113.

It was five years after the Worpsweders' work was exhibited to popular acclaim at the Glaspalast in Munich that Hugo Wagner, Hans am Ende, Heinrich Vogeler and others began to meet weekly to discuss issues concerned with preserving folk culture.⁴⁸⁶ They wrote that their purpose was the 'Pflege von Heimatliebe und Heimatkunst, von Freundschaft und Geselligkeit.'⁴⁸⁷ They founded the *Gewerbemuseum* which was to act as a *Heimat* museum. They established the *Heimat bund*, a sister organization of the *Niedersachsen verein*, which had seven aims, all of which were to be sustained by an assigned member of the committee. They were as follows:

1. Preservation (conservation and inventory) and revival of the Lower Saxony building style. Architect, Hugo Wagner
2. Maintenance and preservation of the Lower Saxony arts and crafts. Assistant and conservator Karl Schaefer from the Crafts Museum.
3. Protection of the characteristic landscape. Painter, Hans am Ende
4. Preservation and partial revival of conventions, customs and local traditional dress. Painter, Ernst Mueller Scheessel.
5. Protection of the local animal and plant world as well as the geological features, Medical Officer, W. Obers Focke
6. Studies of the ancient and prehistory. Director Hugo Schauinsland from the Municipal Museum for Nature, Peoples and Commerce.

⁴⁸⁶ Schütze, *Vogeler*, 1975, 75

⁴⁸⁷ Gustav Brandes, *Hugo Wagner*, Niedersachsen' Feb 1913, 168.

7. Maintenance of the Low German language and literature, Schoolmaster Hermann Tardel.⁴⁸⁸

Their idea was that these designated individuals were to act as mentors to the inhabitants of their area. They would give advice on all of the above fields in order to preserve their regional identity. They claimed to be available to tradesmen and locals, once a week for two hours, to answer questions on their assigned topic: for example, they discussed how to build a country house.⁴⁸⁹ Their strong regional identity was, however, born out of the identity that the artists in Worpswede had worked on developing and been fundamental in its inception. The small troupe of artists and architects including Vogeler, am Ende, Wagner and Schütze had echoed the image of the thatched cottages, so often seen in the Worpswede landscape paintings, in their buildings using modern materials. The white facades of Vogeler's buildings bear a resemblance to his own house, Barkenhoff. Vogeler was creating his own brand of Lower Saxon identity through the building commission, which echoed his international style coupled with a synthesis of the moor colonists' dwellings. Thus, he was promoting his own work. He used his own house as an exemplar of style as part of the creation of a regional identity, which was developed by others through the building commission.

(viii) The Train Stations: 'Back to the Land' and tourists to Worpswede

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 20. (1. Erhaltung (Konservierung und Inventarisierung) und Neubelebung der niedersächsischen Bauweise. Architekt Hugo Wagner 2. Pflege und Erhaltung des niedersächsischen Kunstgewerbes. Assistent und Konservator Karl Schaefer vom Gewerbemuseum. 3. Schutz des Landschaftsbildes. Maler Hans am Ende 4. Erhaltung und teilweise Wiederbelebung der Sitten, Gebrauche und Trachten. Maler Ernst Mueller Scheessel. 5. Schutz der einheimischen Tier- und Pflanzenwelt sowie der geologischen Eigentümlichkeiten Medizinalrat W. Obers Focke 6. Alterungskunde und Praehistorie. Direktor Hugo Schauinsland vom Städtischen Museum für Natur, 'Voelker' und Handelskunde. 7. Pflege der plattdeutschen Sprache und Literatur Oberlehrer Hermann Tardel.)

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

The only book to have appeared to date on Vogeler's train line is Schütze's *Der Moorexpress*.⁴⁹⁰ As with the author's other publications the book uses excellent primary source material to give a history of his subject. This piece of work intends to give a concise argument behind Vogeler's motives, building on Schütze's work and presenting his research while bringing in new sources. From the primary source material, it will be shown that the train line coincided with the concept of the Garden City Movement. This movement aimed to give give workers and their families a better quality of life, by returning them to the countryside and providing them with rural factory employment.

By the early part of the twentieth century Vogeler had his own workshop and gallery from which he could sell works to tourists.⁴⁹¹ The train line benefitted the artist financially and his social conscience. Not everyone was content to bring more tourists and workers into the villages around Worpswede. Vogeler's actions went against many dissenting voices in the Building Commission and the *Niedersachsen verein*.⁴⁹² The line allowed those working in Bremen to commute to work from the surrounding areas.⁴⁹³ It also brought with it electricity to the countryside, making Lower Saxony less of a rustic idyll and more of a legitimate option to live in for those working in the metropolis. Director of the Sanssouci Palace, Hugo Riggers, addressed the dissenting voices of Worpswede who were in opposition to the train line and further industrialisation of the countryside. He

⁴⁹⁰ K. R. Schütze, *Der Moorexpress*, Bremen, 1980

⁴⁹¹ F. Vogeler, *Worpsweder Sitzmöbel nach Entwürfen von Heinrich Vogeler*, Worpsweder Werkstätte, Worpswede, 1908.

⁴⁹² See Schütze 1975 and 1980

⁴⁹³ Schütze, *Vogeler*, 1975, 28

identified himself as a friend of the *Heimatschutzsache*.⁴⁹⁴ He argued convincingly that neighbouring villages such as Lilienthal and Tarmstedt had already been tastelessly developed and that industrialisation was inevitable.⁴⁹⁵ Worpswede, at least, had the opportunity through Vogeler's lead of the *Verschönerungsverein* to make the transition an elegant one. Dissenting voices were eventually quelled by the roar of industry and submitted to the decision of the local council. As Schütze recorded, the *Niedersachsen Verein* reluctantly agreed to the train line but stressed that Vogeler must design the stations using a *heimatliche Bauweise*. The artist then became part of a committee of people who decided on what was constructed for the village.⁴⁹⁶ The artists and architects designed houses with low slanted roofs, which had to be as wide as they were tall in order to replicate the traditional character of the area.⁴⁹⁷ Furthermore, the *Heimatschutz* association stated

the art of building in the countryside does not rely on external ingredients or decorations; it cannot be detached from the building methods handed down through generations or from the sensitivity in adapting to the local conditions.⁴⁹⁸

It will be contended here that if Worpswede were to have a train line built through it, the *Niedersachsen Verein* believed it should be designed by Vogeler, a man known to the *Heimat* associations, who could build sensitively, but also a man whom they believed that they could control. Vogeler and the other artists could therefore sell their work to the tourists at the artists' gallery and the

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 27

⁴⁹⁵ Boulboulle and Zeiss, *Worpswede*, 90

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 26

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 26

⁴⁹⁸ Schütze, *Vogeler*, 1980, 30. die Kunst des Bauens auf dem Lande hängt nicht von äußerlichen Zutaten oder Dekorationen ab, sondern ist von der überlieferten Bauweise und dem Feingefühl in der Anpassung an die gegebenen örtlichen Verhältnisse nicht zu trennen.

workshop. Although the author Schütze identified the fact that Vogeler was involved in the Garden City Movement in Germany, he says nothing of the significant impact of the Langbehn book nor does he comment on the issues of regional or national identity surrounding Worpswede. Vogeler recognised that the way in which he built the train stations meant that his identity would be stamped on the village, to create an enduring legacy for himself and his colleagues.

The train line was financed by local government, who saw it as an investment in industry. The line came to feed an expanding market in raw materials and service the countryside with produce. It cost 20,000 Marks for each station and, with a view to further publicize his own interests, Vogeler convinced the board to grant a further 5,000 Marks for the interior decoration of the Worpswede station. He wrote to the local government official,

The number of summer visitors is around thirty to forty thousand per year. The amount of traffic on the town canal must be considerable, as there are three regular transport firms here and the terrible state of the access causeway from Bremen (which is constantly being repaired) are evidence of an unusually high level of use of this access way. This means that Worpswede will need quite a large railway station. With this personal letter to the District Administrator in Bremervörde, Vogeler attempted to obtain a particularly large train station for Worpswede. He was successful and, in comparison to the original cost estimate that was

based on the size of other station buildings, the construction sum for Worpswede was increased from 20,000 to 25,000 Marks.⁴⁹⁹

Heralded with large gold lettering across the top of the station which read Worpswede, it was the largest of all the stations and opened in 1910.⁵⁰⁰ [Fig. 25]

It was able to service the tourists with two restaurants in the First and Second Class waiting rooms. One was cheaper than the other, giving the locals who were living on a lower wage the opportunity to dine there as well as those with means from the city to enjoy a gastronomic experience. There was also a Third Class waiting room. Vogeler seized the opportunity to use the waiting rooms as an exhibition space for his and his colleagues' work.⁵⁰¹ Additionally, the Worpsweders' art work hung in the carriages of the train on the Worpswede line.⁵⁰² At the *Worpswede Werkstätte*, Vogeler sold replicas of the furnishings from the waiting rooms.⁵⁰³ The interior, which Vogeler had assured all parties would be in keeping with a country-style was in reality a floral version of Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Willow Tea Rooms. [Figs. 26 and 27] It is highly likely that the artist based the stations on his counterpart's tearooms since he had visited Mackintosh himself only two years previously in Glasgow in 1908.⁵⁰⁴ The Glasgow tearooms had been open since 1904. The elongated backs of the chairs and the mirrored white vertical lines of the coat rack in particular resonate closely with Mackintosh. The typical German country style identity was

⁴⁹⁹ Letter to Dr. Wiedenfeld, 20/01/1909, Barkenhoff Stiftung, Worpswede.

⁵⁰⁰ Schütze, *Der Moorexpress*, 48. (Der Sommerverkehr beläuft sich jährlich auf dreißig bis vierzig Tausend Menschen. Der Grachtverkehr muß ein ganz bedeutender sein, drei regelrechte Fuhrgeschäfte bestehen hier, und der fürchterliche Zustand der Zufahrtsschusssee von Bremm (an der immerwährende Reparaturen sind) zeugen von einem ganz unnormalen Beanspruchten dieser Zufuhr. Somit wird für Worpswede ein recht großer Bahnhof Nöten sein. Mit diesem persönlichen Schreiben an den Landrat in Bremervörde setzt Vogeler sich dafür ein, daß Worpswede einen besonders großen Bahnhof bekommt. Er hat damit Erfolg, entgegen der ersten Kostenvorstellung, die sich an der Größe der anderen Stationsgebäude orientierte, wurde die Bausumme für Worpswede von 20 000 auf 25 000 Mark heraufgesetzt)

⁵⁰¹ Schütze, 48 and 70-71

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, 70.

⁵⁰³ Schütze, *Der Moorexpress*, 42.

⁵⁰⁴ H. Vogeler, *Heinrich Vogeler*, Hamburg, 1983, 88

borrowed from a Scottish artist. This again reinforces the fact that Vogeler created an identity for Worpswede not out of a strict Lower Saxon style but by using a variety of international artistic influences.

Vogeler meticulously controlled the entire design, from the wallpaper to the handcrafted chairs and the light fittings, clearly influenced by the English Garden City Movement's leading light, William Morris. In a letter to his fellow artist, Hans am Ende, he complained that the carpet needed to be a lighter shade of blue and that the light fittings should be one inch higher.⁵⁰⁵ Furthermore, after having written to Dr. Wiedenfeld about the increased costs of the Worpswede station, Vogeler wrote again in the following year 1910,

In the interests of obtaining a serious culture in the railway station, I request that you assign me entirely with the artistic administration of Worpswede Railway Station when it goes into operation. It is important that, when machines are allowed to be placed there, I must be given permission to choose the outer form at my own discretion and on my own responsibility; what is more, the matter of posters must be go entirely through me. I am putting a great deal of careful work and high costs into this building and I would now not like this work to have been completely in vain due to the lack of judgement on the part of a publican. You have experience in such matters and will understand my request.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁵ Letter to Hans am Ende, 1900, Barkenhoff Stiftung, Worpswede.

⁵⁰⁶ Letter to Dr. Wiedenfeld from H. Vogeler, 06/07/1910, Barkenhoff Stiftung, Worpswede. (Im Interesse einer ernsthaften Bahnhofs-Kultur bitte ich Sie mir die künstlerische Verwaltung des Bahnhofs Worpswede ganz anzuvertrauen, wenn derselbe in Betrieb gegeben wird. Es handelt sich darum, daß, wenn Automaten aufgestellt werden dürfen, die Wahl der Außenform nach meinem Ermessen und meiner Verantwortung gemacht werden muß, außerdem daß die Angelegenheit mit den Plakaten ganz durch meine Hände geht. Ich stecke viele sorgfältige Arbeit und viele Kosten in dies Gebäude und möchte nun diese Arbeit nicht gern durch den Unverstand eines Wirtes gänzlich zunichte gemacht wissen. Sie haben ja da auch Erfahrung und werden mein Gesuch verstehen.)

The way in which the *Verschönerungsverein* tolerated Vogeler's aggressive marketing and his contemporary designs, as opposed to the desired traditional countryside style, is illustrative of just how much influence the artist had come to wield. As a man with a reputation as an internationally acclaimed artist, Vogeler was an influential man. He edited various journals and was involved in many projects. The committee were interested in marketing their town nationally and internationally. Financially, Worpswede could not refuse to follow Vogeler's lead.

Crucially for Vogeler and his contemporaries, the railway line brought more tourists to the village. They could now visit the artists' own gallery the *Worpsweder Kunst- und Gewerbehaus* and the craft workshop *Worpsweder Werkstätte*, led by Heinrich Vogeler but managed by his brother Franz Vogeler. At the Worpswede gallery, the artists charged entrance fees for exhibitions. One such exhibition, held over the autumn, reportedly sold fourteen works in one day.⁵⁰⁷ As well as selling furniture made by the Vogeler brothers, Heinrich also sold his etchings at the craft workshop. Furthermore, the artist designed chocolate vending machines in return for advertisements, which appeared on the machines themselves.⁵⁰⁸ In addition, he designed a postcard advertising the opening times of his *Werkstätte*. They were printed in parallel to the train times and the postcard was headed with photographs of the interior and exterior of the new Worpswede train station.⁵⁰⁹ Even though Vogeler advocated the preservation of the countryside, he actively sought to bring tourists to the area. He wanted Worpswede to be, like the Bremen Kunsthalle, a place of spiritual

⁵⁰⁷ *Wümme-Zeitung*, 09/08/1909

⁵⁰⁸ Zeiss, *Worpswede*, 1989, 94.

⁵⁰⁹ Postcards are from a private Worpsweder collection at the Altonaer Museum, year book 1976/77 Bd 14/15, 99-122 Hamburg.

reflection but Worpswede would combine nature and culture. His own branding of the village raised the profile of his colleagues and himself.

The *Worpswede Zeitung* was won over by the opening of the station. Under the heading *New Times*; the journalist, Könemann, welcomed both the artists and tourists with pride when he wrote:

And so - Worpswede has been given its railway station! The artists' colony at Weyerberg, which only a few years before had the reputation of tranquillity and loneliness, has hoisted its flags today to show itself to the outside world on this long-awaited, joyful day on which it has been accepted into the railway network of Europe. It was a memorable moment in the history of our town when, this morning at 8 o'clock, the first locomotive, 4 passenger carriages and 1 freight carriage left our new festively decorated railway station on their journey to Osterholz carrying 33 passengers. [...]

And then, after a while, the painters came and said: "Oh, how beautiful" and they ended up staying in this lonely area. And that was how Worpswede was 'discovered'. And it is this triple discovery that we who live on this land and love it thank for the fact that it has become well-known, has blossomed and has pursued the path towards culture, something that was proved today by the opening of our railway line. May it be and remain a symbol of the peaceful development of our beautiful brown silent peatland and the blow of the whistle that now sounds out of

our village every day should remind us of what was once here and of what is here now.⁵¹⁰

Könemann barely contains his excitement in his article about the opened train line. This author believed that the presence of more tourists in Worpswede would make the residents grateful for the natural wonders which they beheld on a daily basis and they would profit from the experience. Vogeler's train stations themselves became part of the experience of visiting Worpswede and its outlying areas. The author's assertion that the train line would connect Worpswede not only with Bremen and other villages but with the whole of Europe is certainly an overstatement. It does demonstrate, however, the ambition of the locals and their international ambitions. Vogeler kept up to date with contemporary design from outside of Germany. This is shown by his assimilation of Mackintosh and Morris' designs. His use of the international style all along the stations, combined with his sensitivity for local design and materials reflected his and his colleagues' concern to reflect a northern identity but yet was modern and immediately accessible.

Vogeler and local architect Walter Schulze developed a plan for a guesthouse to be built near one of the train stations that Vogeler had designed, at Weyerdeelen

⁵¹⁰ E. Koenemann, *Worpswede Zeitung*, 24.12.1910, Also, - Worpswede hat seine Eisenbahn! Die Malerkolonie am Weyerberg, die noch bis vor wenig Jahren den Ruf der Stille und Einsamkeit für sich besaß, hatte heute Fahnen herausgesteckt, um den langerwarteten, feierlichen Tag ihrer Aufnahme in das Schienennetz Europas auch nach außen hin zu zeigen. Für die Geschichte unserer Ortschaft bedeutet es eine Denkwürdigkeit, als heute morgen 8 Uhr der erste Zug- Lokomotive, 4 Personen- und 1 Güterwagen- unsern neuen, festlich geschmückten Bahnhof verließ, um mit 33 Fahrgästen die Reise nach Osterholz anzutreten. [...]
Und abermals nach einer Weile kamen die Maler und sagten: ‚Oh, wie schön‘ und blieben an dieser einsamen Scholle hängen. So wurde Worpswede ‚entdeckt‘. Und dieser dreifachen Entdeckung verdanken wir, die wir an dieser Scholle leben und sie lieben, das Bekanntwerden, Aufblühen und Fortschreiten auf dem Wege zur Kultur, was heute durch die Eröffnung unserer Eisenbahn bewiesen wird. Möge sie ein Zeichen der friedvollen Entwicklung unseres schönen braunen stillen Torlandes sein und bleiben und der Pfiff, dir jetzt täglich so oft zum Dorf herausschallt, soll uns daran erinnern, was einst hier war und was jetzt hier ist.⁵¹⁰

[Fig. 28]. The hotel was built with cross-thatching beams throughout and topped with a thatched roof.⁵¹¹ Schütze had given several lectures in Worpswede and Bremen about the importance of using local materials and traditional styles⁵¹². These ideas culminated in the guesthouse. The reconstruction of Worpswede meant that the artists benefitted not only from an influx of tourists but also from the repeated themes of a so called characteristically Lower Saxon style in the buildings that were newly erected. Tourists who came to see Worpswede then, already familiar with the thatched roofed, short and wide cottages from the artists' paintings would discover such architectural themes in modern buildings. As a consequence the tourists would assume that this was the typical regional style. They were unaware that two hundred years had elapsed between the building of the moor colonists' housing and the modern day cottages.

The *Niedersachsen Verein* stated that new buildings should resemble the old farmhouses 'as if they had not been built by human hand, but had rather emerged as a product of nature itself.'⁵¹³ The houses show that Vogeler was intent on creating an identity for Worpswede with his house as the centrepiece. As the chief architect for the village and through his influence within the Building Commission, Vogeler was able then to control how the village was developed.

In the 1906 Annual Report for the *Niedersachsen Verein* Karl Schaefer wrote:

We want to (...), where possible, look for some kind of balance between the heartless, ruthless capitalist exploitation of our homeland and the requirements of the soul. A person cannot live from bread alone or from

⁵¹¹ Schütze, *Moorexpress*, 62-63.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, 62.

⁵¹³ Schütze, *Vogeler*, 1975, 20.

dividends. We want to raise our voices when they destroy this our German land with American abandon.⁵¹⁴

Here Schaefer defends German identity against the threat of American capitalism. He suggests that capitalism threatens the very soul of Germany, stating that 'we cannot live on bread and dividends alone.' However, German identity was still in a state of flux. The industrialization of Europe and the US brought with it competing markets, which in the Ernst Gellner sense probed questions about nationalism.

Conclusion

The artists of Worpswede were seen to be active in the protection of the identity of their village. They claimed to be preserving a traditional village but were largely preserving what they had created. The steps they took in the preservation of the natural landscape in the village they worked in were well reported as one contemporary art critic wrote:

It is a more succinct example of what an artist achieves if he, far away from any distracting influences, concentrates on one goal: nobody is

⁵¹⁴ *Niedersächsisches Verein* (Wir wollen (...), wo immer es angesht, zwischen der herzlosen, rücksichtslosen kapitalistischen Ausbeutung des Heimatbodens und den Forderungen des Gemuts ineen Ausgleich suchen. Denn der Mensch lebt nicht von Brot allein und von Dividenden. Wir wollen unsere Stimme erheben, wenn man mit echt amerikanischer Unbekümmertheit unser deutsches Land, unsere Heimat vernichtet.)

better than the Worpswede painters at delving into a nature that they have come to love. What makes them so serious and impressive is the deep truth of their works, which awakens our feelings for them, the absence of any pretence whatsoever, which makes them appear so intimate, the familiarity with the soil of their homeland. This is not a mere portrayal of something that one likes the appearance of; it is a merging into oneness with nature around us, the painting grows out of the face of the land and its people.⁵¹⁵

In reality the artists, led by Vogeler, manipulated contemporary concerns over the countryside in order to stamp their own identity on the village and market it as their own. Vogeler was driven by his need for money to support his wife through her illness and his ever increasingly flamboyant house; as Vogeler stated in a letter to Alfred Heymel, he was driven by his pressing financial concerns but the good thing was that he was still busy with his work:

I have finally completed my house here and it is very comfortable as far as heating, water supply and space to work goes. Unfortunately it was built too expensively – a millstone round my neck and I cannot move from the

⁵¹⁵ M. Zeiss, *Worpswede*, 50 (Doch ein präganteres Beispiel dafür, was ein Künstler erreicht, wenn er sich, fern von allen zerstreuen Einflüssen, auf ein Ziel konzentriert: sich in eine ihm liebgewordene Natur zu vertiefen, liefert niemand besser als die Worpsweder. Was sie so ernst und imponierend macht, das ist die tiefe Wahrheit ihrer Werke, was so Sympathie erweckt, die Abwesenheit jeglicher Phrase, was sie so intim erscheinen läßt, die Vertrautheit mit der heimatlichen Scholle. Das ist kein bloßes Abmalen, was einem äußerlich gefallen, sondern ein Einswerden mit der umgebenden Natur, ein Herauswachsen des Kunstwerkes aus dem Gesicht des Landes und des Volks')

spot. However, better times will come! The main thing is that work is going well.⁵¹⁶

However, Vogeler also hankered after a new world order, which opposed the growing materialism, insipid ephemeral latter day lifestyle, as he saw it. The artists' actions in Worpswede probably did more to destroy the surrounding countryside than to preserve it, assessed from today's perspective of nature conservation. For example, although they suggested that Worpswede's natural landscape was original or special, there is no evidence to suggest that they marked off areas of the countryside from tourists. Protecting and admiring the landscape was an attitude, which became enshrined in law after the Second World War. Significant parts of the moorlands were sealed off as national parks.⁵¹⁷

In the short term, the artists actually modernised the village. Vogeler modernised his own house, bringing electricity to the area, designing a set of train stations through the moorland and building modern, vital housing for the workers of local factories.⁵¹⁸ The myth that began in their landscape paintings was sustained and perpetuated by their involvement in associations, writing and illustrating for regional journals. This myth was a pretext for their own ambitions that were financial, personal and social.

⁵¹⁶ Letter from Heinrich Vogeler to Alfred Walter Heymel, Barkenhof Archive, 07.05.1909. (Ich habe mir hier mein Haus jetzt endlich recht komfortabel zusammengebaut, was Heizung, Wasserversorgung und Arbeitsräume anbetrifft. Leider zu teuer (*sic*) gebaut – Klotz am Bein, kann mich nicht rühren. Aber bessere Zeiten werden schon kommen! Die Hauptsache ist, dass die Arbeit geht.)

⁵¹⁷ K. Göttlich, *Moor und Torfkunde*, Stuttgart, 1976, 32

⁵¹⁸ Schütze, *Vogeler*, 1975, 101.

Their work established the village as more than a farming community. The village and its outlying areas became regarded with high esteem and this attracted tourists to come and view the artists' work as well as the 'idyllic' countryside that inspired it. Therefore, the artists were financed and again the cycle of tourism and regional associations continued. Tourism has continued unabated to this day, resulting in a large building towering over the village and housing several collections of the Worpswede artworks. Today the village features three museums, one is Vogeler's former residence, Barkenhoff, the other is a general museum of the work by the first generation of Worpswede artists called Grosse Kunstschau Worpswede. There is even a museum dedicated to the boats which featured in the artists' work that carried peat to Bremen. The identity that the artists created still pertains, even though it was founded on a myth.

It has been determined in this chapter that the identity of the village was created by the artists but tourists believed they were visiting the authentic Worpswede which had inspired the artists to paint in the first place. Through the building commission Hans am Ende and Vogeler took some of the characteristics which they found charming about the existing farmhouses and made them directives. This chapter has shown that the artists were inspired by Langbehn's directive to create a regional aesthetic in order to become national icons. Vogeler and his colleagues built a village using modern materials from an old-fashioned farmhouse style. The result was that the identity of the village came to be coveted as emblematic of Lower Saxon style but in reality its architectural motifs were Vogeler's home synthesis between the international style and the cottages

he had seen in the Worpswede moors. Despite efforts to market Worpswede internationally it has remained a place known predominately within Germany.

Conclusion: commercialising the countryside

This thesis has explored the construction of identities in German landscape painted around the turn of the century; it looked at the town of Dachau, the region of the Eifel and the village of Worpswede. As stated in the introduction, identity in this thesis was always going to be a plural concept; it is expressed in the landscapes, with Dachau and Worpswede being local identities, the Eifel and Lower Saxony were regional and Germany, and to a lesser extent Bavaria, were national identities. There are more identities at work in this thesis than in Confino's sense of German identity during this period, which was that local translated into national (1997), but the outcome is the same, local/regional identity fed into a sense of German national identity. This thesis has shown how different identities competed with each other, as with the Bavarian and Prussian example but coexisted and fed into a national identity, as Confino showed was the outcome of his investigation into regional identity. The paintings detailed in this study offer a visual reference to the resistance of assimilation into Prussian dominated German identity.⁵¹⁹ Landscape painting of this era was an expression and a stimulus for a compound of identities which fed into a homogeneous national identity.

What has become evident through the detailed study of primary sources on this topic is how important the vehicle of tourism was for the artists in order to establish and develop the identity of the region that they represented. This thesis concludes with the assertion that the landscape artists were actively engaged in branding regional identity through commercial exchanges. The

⁵¹⁹ C. Applegate, *Music, Criticism and the Challenge of History*, Oxford, 2002, 160

argument made in this conclusion is that the artists and tourists in this thesis were consciously engaged in an act of commercial trade in which the artist constructed an identity disseminated by journalists and accepted, and even built upon, by the tourists themselves; therefore there was a perpetual relationship between artists and tourists. While the field of tourism and art is well trodden, the premise that artists acted as cultural ambassadors in order to lure tourists to the countryside, however, seems to be new as outlined in detail below.

Conscious inventors or unconscious collaborator?

The book that comes closest to the findings of this investigation is by David Crouch and Nina Lübbren who describe, in *Visual Culture and Tourism*, that artists attracted tourists to certain areas with their various depictions of an idyllic country or region.⁵²⁰ They call artists 'drivers of the tourist bus', ultimately they argue that artists unconsciously attracted tourists to the spots that they painted. The conclusion of this thesis builds on the research of Lübbren and Crouch and takes it a step further in arguing that the artists examined in the present work consciously acted as cultural ambassadors; the artists attracted tourists to the area with their paintings of landscapes. Their objectives were twofold; firstly, to paint a place that advertised a feasible holiday destination complete with facilities to cater to the tourists' needs (including transport and a market) and secondly, to create a souvenir for the tourist as a token of their trip.

⁵²⁰ D. Crouch and N. Lübbren (Eds.) *Visual Culture and Tourism*, Oxford, 2003, 109

Although this topic still seems to be in its infancy in the field of art history it has benefited from attention in the field of literature. *Literary Tourism and Nineteenth-Century Culture* examines how tourists interested in literature visit the places where authors have written and the places they have written about.⁵²¹ A contributor to the book, Karyn Wilson-Costa demonstrates that the tourists interpret the landscape with the same subjective reading as the author. She explains that tourists to Ayrshire saw not their own version of the countryside but that of Robert Burns, which had been constructed in his poems.⁵²² It has been shown in the present thesis that tourists, contributors to local journals and writers willingly adopted the identities that the artists had defined for the Eifel region, Dachau and the village of Worpswede in the same way as Wilson-Costa shows tourists visiting Ayrshire did. Similarly to Wilson-Costa, Dean MacCannell argues, in *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, that the guidebook largely determines the tourists' experience of the site before they visit.⁵²³ As an advertisement then the artists' paintings act correspondingly to the way in which MacCannell describes the guidebook's function. The identity that the artists had claimed for the region is already accepted before the tourist arrives and arguably influences the tourists' viewing of the real site. Comparably, in another chapter in *Literary Tourism and Nineteenth-Century Culture* Margaret D. Stetz argues, in 'Selling Literary Tourism in *The Bookman*', that the editor of the *Bookman* wrote guides to places of literary interest such as Wessex where he showed maps of places where Thomas Hardy's characters had lived in order to

⁵²¹ N. Watson (ed.), *Literary Tourism and Nineteenth-Century Culture*, Basingstoke, 2009

⁵²² *Ibid.*, 39

⁵²³ D. MacCannell, *The Tourist: A new theory of the Leisure Class*, London, 1999

promote Hardy's work which the editor also published.⁵²⁴ This commercial exchange is between tourist and a literary third party, rather than creator of the fictional account whereas the exchange in this thesis is directly between the creator and the tourist.

Beyond the picture: artists defining identity in print

Further to paintings: the artists in this thesis have been shown to have published their work in, were written about and even edited regional journals which aimed to preserve the countryside as part of the local identity for locals and tourists in order to gain the revenue to collectively protect the identity that they themselves had defined. For example, the Eifel dwellers saw the heather that Wille and Hartung had painted as particular to their landscape, the Worpsweders wanted to maintain the thatched roofs that the Worpswede artists had repeatedly depicted and the Dachauers were keen to preserve the moorland eulogised by the artists. In Kevin Meethan's *Tourism in Global Society, Place, Culture and Consumption*⁵²⁵ the author asserts that local journals' articles on local issues (such as the ones to which the artists contributed as outlined in this thesis) translate into a claim of ownership over the region. He argues that a collective history creates a sense of belonging. What is intriguing about the artists studied in this thesis is that they were involved in founding and developing the local journals that they also contributed to with reproductions of their paintings, or in the case of Heinrich Vogeler, provided designs for the layout. What the locals would take pride in, publish about and form as their identity in order to take

⁵²⁴ Watson, *Literary Tourism*, 121-122

⁵²⁵ Kevin Meethan's *Tourism in Global Society, Place, Culture and Consumption*

ownership in was established by the artists but developed by local journalists. There was a dialogue between author and artist to create the identity that locals would eventually establish as their own. A case in point is Dachau where tourists were attracted to the distinctiveness of Bavarian costume. To satisfy the tourists' desire for a sense of otherness, locals dressed up in their wedding costumes for the artist to paint, and tourists bought these paintings accepting this image as a description of *Tracht* that was represented as the *habitual* Bavarian costume. The artist is catering directly to the tourists' idea of Bavarian identity. Jules Rosette describes a similar phenomenon in *The Messages of Tourist Art. An African Semiotic System in Comparative Perspective*, where tourists have a constructed idea through the media about the sort of souvenir they would like to buy.⁵²⁶ Rosette gives the example of a wooden piece of craft that they see as traditional. The trader ends up creating a piece of work that suits the tourists' idea of traditional African culture. This means that the tourist's expectation is the driving force in the formation of a style.⁵²⁷

Sameness and otherness: tourist, artist or the local and the tourist

As argued here, tourism was a negotiation of regional identity: urban tourists searched for the 'sublime landscape', the 'quirky' artists' colony or the traditional Bavarian village with its mysterious moors that the artist had created, also in view of tourists' expectations. Intriguingly, the artists, who came from outside the region, were 'other', established themselves as local or 'same', constructing a regional identity from a position of outside: With the exception of Heinrich

⁵²⁶ Rosette, Jules *The Messages of Tourist Art, An African Semiotic System in Comparative Perspective*, New York, 1984, xi
⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3

Hartung all the artists in this thesis lived in and bought houses in the place their work was to be associated with; none of the artists were actually from the village or town that made their reputation. They shared with the tourist a sense of 'otherness', providing them with the tools to construct what tourists expected. Those living in the towns and villages that the artists represented helped to sustain and develop these identities in order to attract the tourist and sustain their own economies through the conservation movements, regional journals and regional festivals.

The tourist, by Dean MacCannell's definition at the turn of the century in Germany, would have had more in common with the artists' social background than the farm labourer, they had *leisure time* and were part of a rapidly emerging middle class.⁵²⁸ Thus the artist shared a similar sense of otherness with the tourist. In Dachau, it has been identified in this work that, there was an industry of local people that catered for the artist: providing studios, paints, models and even photographs of the landscapes. The locals involved in the tourist business then not only financially benefitted from the tourists that the artist attracted but were also subsidised directly by the artist. The Worpsweder's lavish parties with the intellectual elite could have had nothing in common with the local struggling farm labourer. They adopted the guise of the locals in their bid to stake a claim to regional identity yet were always doing so from the perspective of the culturally empowered other as a form of cultural Imperialism.

⁵²⁸ D. MacCannell, *The Tourist, A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, 1.

Furthermore, Robert Herbert explains that Monet was able to act as a cultural Imperialist as tourists came to Étreat with the expectation of experiencing Monet's landscapes and stood in the same spot from which Monet painted. This trend was also claimed to have happened in Dachau and Worpswede.⁵²⁹ Monet, however, showed a rebuked modernised France by disregarding the hotels and restaurants, which could sustain the tourist.⁵³⁰ The German landscape artists used depictions of towns and villages that advertised simple, clean rural living to the paying guest from local industrialised towns, such as: Fritz von Wille's *Sötenich im Herbst* [Fig. 6] from the first chapter, Arthur Langhammer's *Dachauerin unter Kastanienblüten* [Fig. 7] from the second chapter and Otto Modersohn's, *Herbstmorgen am Moorkanal* [Fig. 3] the final chapter. Even the painters of the sublime Eifel landscape managed to depict towns in their backgrounds that could nourish and house the traveller. The old Dachau market town, equipped to house the traveller, featured separately to the artists' repertoire of the transcendent moor landscapes. Clearly indicating that Dachau was open for business, Hölzel even praised the refreshments to be found at the local guesthouse in an art journal.⁵³¹

The authors of *Tourism Promotion and Power* explain a similar situation with their example when they discuss the importance of the 'tourist image' in general:

The image creators and potential tourists both share and are products of particular social systems. [The former] are drawing on shared meaning systems to create images which will appeal to tourists from similar

⁵²⁹ G. Boulboulle and M. Zeiss, *Worpswede*, 90. E. Boser, *Freilichtmalerei*, 28.

⁵³⁰ R. Herbert, *Monet on the Normandy Coast: Tourism and Painting*, New Haven, 1994, 15

⁵³¹ A. Hölzel, *Über Künstlerische Ausdrucksmittel und Deren Verhältnis zu Natur und Bild*. 'Die Kunst für Alle', (Dec, 15), 1904, 138.

societies. Therefore at the same time, particular ways of seeing the world and its inhabitants are reinforced at the expense of alternatives. The language of tourism can therefore be seen as the master subject's language of social control.⁵³²

The social control that was expounded by the artists investigated here was part of wider political and social changes such as the unification of Germany that caused a cultural probing into national identity that was expressed federally by both artists and authors. The aim of their form of social control was ultimately the sale of their work. By defining the identity of the region their reputation was attached to the area that they painted from. Worpswede was the extreme case where tourists were not just attracted to the way in which the artists had depicted the countryside but came to visit the artists' colony itself. If the artists were attempting to impose a form of social control through local journals, their paintings and their involvement in regional associations, then their ends were to control or 'own' the identity of the landscape so that they could market their work as propaganda to tourists. It is difficult to say whether or not the artists were interested in more than the buying and selling of a commodity. Only Fritz von Wille's dying wish to be buried in the Eifel Mountains seems to indicate a genuine attachment to the countryside. What is more important, however, is what these artists achieved; they claimed the landscape as theirs' and then made it a commodity and gave it a sense of belonging.

Deconstructing identities

⁵³² N. Morgan, A. Pritchard, *Tourism Promotion and Power*, Chichester, 1998,17

Dean MacCannell makes the case in his book, titled *Empty Meeting Grounds*, that all tourist visual media is fictional. He repeatedly cites Disney World as his point of reference:⁵³³ 'Every major city in the West has been transformed into a living version of the fictional compression of cultures as represented at Disney World.'⁵³⁴ MacCannell is of course talking about Disney World here and not German landscape painting but why the Dachau artists chose to represent locals in their regional wedding costume rather than in the clothes that they wore everyday on the farms or working at the market (as implied by the paintings), why the Eifel artists chose to hint at Catholicism, and why artists in Worpswede chose to depict thatched roofs, were not fictional accounts of culture but were assertions that the artists chose these as cultural aspects of rural life - as symbols to represent regional identities. Some of the strands of identities that the artists were involved in creating, however, were at times based on myth, as in the case of the Eifel. The instances of exploiting regional costume to increase its aspect of difference is again not fictional but does play on MacCannell's idea of a construction of identity. This process of utilizing and expanding upon existing cultural differences was again used by artists in Worpswede who saw the thatched roofed huts of the town as 'other' and through their directive in the tourist industry commissioned more of them which increased the cultural hegemony that they had created.

Through co-operation between the artists, between artists and authors, through repetition of the same themes in their paintings, and in Worpswede where artists actually sanctified by law what they saw to be particular to the region, the

⁵³³ D. MacCannell, *Empty Meeting Grounds*, New York, 1992, 1

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1

artists in this thesis systematically and commercialised regional identity. This thesis has shown how tourism can help to form identity. Through the advertising of a place depicted in postcards and paintings by artists and described in literature by locals keen on promoting their region, artists and locals were keen to promote a region with the same rhetoric. Artists and locals who were involved in the tourist industry used a cohesive propaganda and played on issues of otherness in order to lure the visitor into a place which is different from the tourists' daily experiences. The tourists in the neighbouring cities to the two artists' colonies and the Eifel region were sold something other than that had seemed a secure identity in a peaceful country retreat. Through tourism the landscape artists defined regional identity, which fed back into a national identity. Tourism fuelled by the artists funded nature conservation groups which only enhanced the sense of distinctiveness of Germany and augmented German's special relationship with their natural environment. Artists, tourists and locals were in a process of developing identities, which were affirmed and expanded upon during their exchanges. This thesis encourages further examination in the re-writing of art history where, through the sale of landscape painting to tourists in the post-industrialised world, artists have constructed identities.

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